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TRAVELS AND TRAVELLERS.
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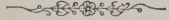
BY

MRS. TROLLOPE,

AUTHOR OF

"FATHER EUSTACE," "CHARLES CHESTERFIELD," ETC.



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Gräffenberg.

When contemplated a little *en masse*, that is, from a point sufficiently distant in time to give us a tolerably wide extent to look over, there is something almost comic in the variety of specifics which have been hit upon by poor blundering, but always onward-struggling man, for the remedy of the ills that he is heir to.

But though this may be the effect produced upon the idle looker-on, by the variety, not to say contrariety, of the means employed to achieve this great object, the attempt, whenever seriously and honestly made, is far too laudable, and too important also, to be treated lightly. A perfect catalogue of all the experiments tried to

"Make men well, when they are sick,"

could scarcely be perused with gravity; yet, with the above proviso, that they were made seriously and honestly, there would probably not be found one wholly unworthy of attention; and perhaps it may be doubted whether there has been more folly shown in the ignorant rejection, or in the ignorant adoption of some among them. The name of the remote, and, till recently, most obscure little hamlet of Gräffenberg, will now at once tell the reader, let him come from what quarter of the world he may, that the following pages are on the subject of the *water cure*, or, at any rate, on the place where it was first tried, and where its inventor has surrounded himself with an immense establishment, in the midst of which he resides, honoured as a sovereign, beloved as a benefactor, and, by many, almost worshipped as a saint.

The long-established habit of wandering during the summer months, made the idea of passing from Florence to Silesia a much less terrific thing to me than it would be to most people; and one of my family having been complaining of dyspepsia, and another friend, for whose health I was greatly interested, appearing to think that both the journey and the discipline might be beneficial to her, we set off, a party of four, from the fair City of Flowers, to travel about nine hundred miles to the north-east of it, for the sake of sounding the well, at the bottom of which Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton says that health is to be found.

Much short of nine hundred miles we could not have made the distance; but we, in our usual desultory style, contrived to make it considerably more. We certainly came now and then upon some detestably bad inns, where sundry divine creations of a less tranquil nature than sleep, visited our pillows; but excepting this occasional annoyance, the journey had more to please than weary. It is no great misfortune to be obliged to visit Bologna, Padua, and Venice, especially since a tolerably easy rail-road has connected the two last. At Venice, however, I did find a real misfortune, in the shape of an artist who was employed by Louis Philippe to copy the Assumption, and whose canvas *almost* concealed the glowing morsel of immortality of which it hoped to carry away the *reflêt*. It is quite right in Louis Philippe to endeavour to obtain a copy of the Assumption, but those who visit the gallery of the Belli Arti at Venice while it is about, are out of luck. I ought to have found comfort from remembering that I had seen it before; but such is the perversity of human nature, that I thought myself in a more pitiable condition than those of my party who knew not what they had lost.

The first unnecessary lengthening of our road which our errant fancies decided upon, was the coming by Innspruck and Saltzberg, instead of making our way direct from Venice to Vienna, and so on, by railroad, to the nearest point beyond, at which that road approaches Gräffenberg. Nor did even this content us. Having decided that we *must* revisit Innspruck and Saltzberg,

we next called a council upon the propriety of going through the magnificent new pass recently opened by Austria, called the Pass of Ampezzo. The shorter way, I believe, would have been by the Val di Suzana to Trent, and so across the Brenner. But this we had done before, and only the preceding year, when returning to Florence from England, through Germany. So it was carried, *nem. con.*, that we should enter upon this magnificent gorge at Senavalle, and pass through it into the Pusterthal at Niederdorf, which enabled us to recover the great Brenner road a little above Brixen. Let no travellers under similar circumstances ever decide otherwise. It is scarcely possible, I think, for the imagination to conceive more stupendous mountain scenery than this road displays. Moreover, it is like all roads made by the Austrian government, (and to use a familiar form of praise,) as good as it is beautiful. A thousand studies of rock, wood, and water, such as would have made the heart of G. Poussin dance within him, might be found by artists on this road, and that without scrambling an inch out of it to find them. What they might meet with, if they did scramble a little, who shall say?

We passed within a very short distance—two miles, I think—of the birth-place of Titian, called Piave de Cadore. The family of Vecellio still exists there; and it was our purpose to have made a pilgrimage to the spot, but we were prevented doing so by a hard shower of rain. By the way, it is impossible for any one at all familiar with the pictures of Titian not to feel that the backgrounds, which even in half-length portraits are so often, by means of an open window, made to give such a magical charm to his pictures, have their originals in this region. I must not pause to prate about Prague, only just observing, that those seven castles belonging to the King of Bohemia, of which our well-nigh forgotten Lawrence Sterne makes honourable mention, are unquestionably to be found in this very grand city, collected into one, and now known by the name of the Ilrodschin. It is said to contain four hundred and forty rooms; and although I cannot say that I entered them all, I can truly aver that I have not the smallest doubt of the fact. If the number

had been stated as greater, I should have readily believed it possible, from the enormous distance to which the almost endless edifice seems to extend itself. Amongst many other valuable things, it contains by far the finest ball-room I ever entered.

And now, being at Prague, we might have transported ourselves to Hohenstadt, a point at the distance of about twenty-eight English miles from Gräffenberg, right easily by railroad. But it was decreed by fate that we should discover that Dresden and its gallery were not only at an easy day's distance from Prague, but also that a part of the distance might be traversed by a steam-boat on the Elbe, a mode of travelling so exceedingly restorative to the limbs of way-worn travellers, that a very few minutes' consideration convinced us all that it would be a manifest want of common sense if we did not profit by it.

This, taken (of course) in conjunction with the undeniable fact that we should rather prefer seeing the picture-gallery at Dresden than not, induced us to make a little farther delay, and to set off at four o'clock in the morning for the Saxon capital.

This excursion was, altogether, a most delightful one. What the Dresden picture gallery is, I need not trouble myself to mention; its *quite* unequalled treasures being rather too notorious for my doing so to be of any possible utility to any one. But, for the same reason which has led me to linger thus on my road to Gräffenberg, in order to point out how much its distance is shortened by the enchantments scattered along the road, I may just mention that we all agreed in thinking Dresden, even independent of its matchless pictures, one of the most *piacevole* and attractive cities we ever entered. Our little voyage, too, brought us within such short distance of the beautiful region called Saxon Switzerland, as made us fully comprehend how well it deserved the name.

Late on the evening of the third day we re-entered Prague, and early on the following morning placed ourselves in one of the comfortable railroad carriages, (which had we occupied it long enough, would have taken us to Vienna,) and felt at length pretty tolerably sure that we were actually going to Gräffenberg.

* * * * *

And now, my object being to make myself as useful as possible to all who may chance to follow me thither, I shall make no apologies for any minuteness of description into which I may chance to fall, feeling certain that the persons for whom these pages are chiefly intended will thank me for it; for Gräffenberg is not only a great way from England, but it is very much out of the *common way*, in more senses than one, and I know by experience that all particulars concerning it may be useful.

On reaching Hohenstadt, there seemed to exist some doubt among the persons to whom we applied at the station, respecting the carriage that was to take us on, as to whether it was in truth the nearest point to Gräffenberg at which we could be set down; and we all, naturally, began to share these doubts when we discovered that no conveyance was to be found either at the station, or near it, that could convey us to the place of our destination. Very fortunately, however, a carriage capable of conveying our party arrived from Gräffenberg at the moment that our embarrassment seemed at its height; for the train had passed on, and we had just ascertained that there was little chance of our getting either lodging or food when it had left us. An hour's bait enabled this welcome conveyance to set off again upon its return, but with the understanding that we were not to arrive at Gräffenberg that night, but must sleep at a little place called Huhndorf, about half way.

We were too glad to obtain a conveyance upon any conditions to dispute the point with the driver, although at four o'clock on a Midsummer day there seemed no danger of being benighted, even if we had decided upon going the whole of the twenty-seven miles without pausing for the night, midway. But notwithstanding this rather discouraging description of the Hohenstadt station, as the point from which to leave the railroad for Gräffenberg, it *is* the best. The Gräffenberg post is carried to Vienna by a stage-coach, and meets the train at Olmütz; but the distance to Olmütz is nearly double that to Hohenstadt.

Our night's lodging at Huhndorf was at one of those

wild-looking farm-house inns which are so frequently found in the remoter provinces of the Austrian empire. A snug stay-at-home English reader would shudder were I to rehearse *all* the particulars of the *accommodation* we met with—but we got abundance of good white bread and milk, and the three ladies of the party lay down in their three narrow wooden troughs, (for so only can I describe the bedsteads,) in one room, as contentedly as they could. Upon this occasion, as well as upon one or two others, while traversing Bohemia, my Italian man-servant had to watch his bed deliberately constructed before his eyes from straw brought from the farm-yard, and reduced to seemly shape by the help of a pitchfork. For this species of bed we repeatedly paid very nearly as much as for our own; but there was no means of mending the matter, for our four beds generally took every pillow and mattress in the house.

On at length reaching the end of our journey, we found that lodging ourselves at *Gräffenberg* was out of the question. The hamlet so called, and in which the establishment of Dr. Preissnitz is situated, stands upon the summit of a high and very steep hill, and consists almost entirely of a few miserable cottages, of which one portion is let for lodgings, and the other inhabited by cows. We had been strongly advised not to go into Dr. Preissnitz's house, as, from its receiving some hundreds of patients afflicted by pretty nearly all the ills of humanity, it was not likely to afford an agreeable residence.

On first arriving, we took up our quarters at the Gräffenberg Hotel, in the little town at the foot of the hill called Freiwalden. We had been told this was the best, and, as far as I have been able to discover, it is the only hotel in the place, and to travellers as way-worn as ourselves it appeared almost comfortable. A very few hours passed in Freiwalden sufficed to obtain as much information as was necessary to convince us that, though we were come to Gräffenberg, it was at Freiwalden that we must lodge. Nevertheless, my son climbed the hill before he could consent to our taking apartments at the foot of it, but speedily returned to tell us that so it must

be, as our attempting to get into any of the places at Gräffenberg was out of the question.

Except the large mansion of the wealthy Burgomeister, I doubt if there be a single house in Freiwalden which does not let lodgings, and as the place is long and straggling, there are a great many of them. A short search enabled us to judge what sort of accommodation was to be expected, and we found several, still unoccupied, which seemed capable of accommodating us tolerably well, and from among these we selected the best. And now we thought we were settled, and that we had nothing more to do than order our various trunks to be conveyed from the inn, and to take possession.

But here we were most grievously mistaken. I never remember to have witnessed a more grotesque distress than which fell upon us when we proclaimed to our landlord that it was our intention immediately to take possession. We then learned, with what feelings of dismay let those who are seeking rest after a thousand miles of wandering imagine, that before we could sleep in the lodgings we must either buy or hire beds, bolsters, pillows, blankets, and counterpanes; and that before we could eat in them, we must buy plates, dishes, cups, glasses, etc. etc. etc.—not to mention the whole *batterie de cuisine.*

This information seemed to throw us into a situation infinitely worse than if we had found no lodgings at all, for then we should have made up our minds to remain at the queer little hotel, and there would have been an end of it. What was to be done? Had we been a hundred instead of a thousand miles from Florence, I certainly think I should have shown a white feather, and have gently hinted at the probable advantages of going home again. But, as it was, despair gave me courage, as it has done others before me.

"Returning were as tedious as go o'er;"

and therefore we, one and all, meekly set to work, to make the best we could of our condition.

Certainly there are some few of our distant friends who would have felt inclined to laugh at us, could they have witnessed the scene which followed. There we all stood

together in the little shop which professes to have everything that man, in his domestic state, requires. But this boast should be understood with a difference; it can only mean to refer to the wants of man in the first stage of civilization. There we stood, however, endeavouring, one and all of us, to remember all the things that were absolutely necessary to existence, and this went on till the whole counter was covered from end to end with crockery of all sorts, and a lot of coarse pottery, by way of crocks, kettles, and *casseroles*. Fortunately for our purses, this simple sort of fitting up cost wonderfully little, and when at length the unexpected work was done, and we got at last into our humble dwelling, we all seemed as proud of having a salt-cellar and a cream-jug, etc. etc., as if they had all been of burnished gold.

Then came the requesting a visit from the great doctor, and great was the interest with which we looked at him. His simplicity of manner is still that of a friendly, kind-hearted peasant, but his brow and the expression of his mouth show intellect and resolution. I am assured that he still reads with great difficulty, and that he cannot write at all. The examination of his two patients produced a series of directions which, in the first instance, are, I believe, pretty similar in all cases. They were both to live with wet towels round the waist; both to be enfolded twice or thrice a day in a wet sheet; both to lessen their ordinary quantity of warm garments; both to drink about a dozen glasses of water per diem; and both to abstain from tea, coffee, wine, and fermented beverages of all sorts.

In addition to this, and to be adopted more gradually by the lady than by the gentleman, a cold bath was ordered, sometimes for the whole person, sometimes for sitting in; and, moreover, the most mysterious process of all, consisting of the being closely rolled up in a wet sheet, and then enveloped over it in a blanket of enormous thickness. This process is technically called "*packing*," and, by what I hear, well deserves the name. The patient lies thus packed for about twenty minutes on the bed, and the sensation is described by some as being very delightful. At the end of the twenty minutes he is

plunged in a cold bath. After every application of water, a brisk, short walk is prescribed *de rigueur*, and long walks, both morning and evening, into the bargain.

The gentleman has a bath-man, and the lady a bath-woman, to attend upon them, whose duty it is, in addition to preparing the baths, wet sheets, dry blankets, and so forth, to rub their patients very perseveringly with the hand while they are enveloped in the wet sheet. After a few days of this initiatory practice, the *douche* is applied with more or less severity, according to the strength and condition of the patient. And this, as far as I can understand it, is all.

The skill of Dr. Preissnitz is, however, highly necessary in all critical cases, to regulate the degree in which these different operations are to be administered; and the statements which meet us from all quarters, of the wonderful acuteness with which he discerns the peculiarities of constitution or disease are most extraordinary, and inspire, as they ought to do, the most unbounded confidence in all who place themselves in his hands.

So many particular cases have already been laid before the public, in which this most natural, though hitherto neglected remedy, has produced effects that, in some instances, almost appear miraculous, that the reduplication of them must be superfluous. The company here, amounting to many hundred persons, meet together freely, and acquaintances are easily and readily made. The great advantage of this is, that one is enabled to hear in detail a multitude of cases, which, by their irresistible force of evidence, leaves no *possibility* of doubt upon the mind respecting the truth of all the most important facts which have been laid before the public respecting the power of this long-neglected agent upon the human frame. I am far from thinking, however, that a journey to Gräffenberg is necessary for its application. I speak not now of the notorious fact, that there are many other establishments of a similar kind, but of the more important one still, that, as a constant and sure remedy in the great majority of maladies to which the human race is subject, it may be applied as safely, and almost as easily, as the washing our hands. It must never be forgotten,

however, that the acute philosopher of Gräffenberg by no means rests upon the application of water alone as a means of cure. This is his most active agent; but he has other agents also, which are scarcely, if at all, less important. The total and entire abstraction of all viands, all beverages, all habits, all indulgences, hostile in the very least degree to the healthy, that is to say, the *natural* state of man, is enforced as a condition upon every patient, and, unless complied with to the very fullest extent, Dr. Preissnitz ceases his attendance.

A little reflection upon the *amount of power* independent of his watery applications, which this invests him with, may perhaps lessen the incredulity which many persons still avow on the subject of the Gräffenberg cures. In order fully to feel this, it may perhaps be necessary, in the present state of the world, to come to Gräffenberg, for there only, I imagine, can the contrast between the mode of existence upon which he insists, and that ordinarily led by what are called civilized human beings, be fairly appreciated.

In London, Paris, or any of the great capitals of Europe, the division and occupation of the day is, for the most part, very similar, as far as the habits influential on the constitution are concerned. In this estimate I would not include any whose habits were grossly profligate or intemperate, but only such as follow with the ordinary degree of moderation the customs and manners of those around them. Let us trace the history of a London lady's day, as far as her health is concerned. Let her be of the middle class, middle age, and middle place in the scale of intellect.

She rises about nine: the first thing she does on quitting her bed is to enwrap herself in a dressing-gown, probably of some soft, clinging material, which effectually impedes the approach of air to her person. She then gently applies a very moderate quantity of water, generally warm, to such portions of her skin as she thinks necessary. This varies a good deal, I believe, in different individuals, but entire immersion is the daily habit of very few. The process of dressing need not be dwelt upon, excepting indeed to observe that not above one woman in a hundred

completes her toilet without materially impeding the most important of all the vital actions, namely, that of breathing. Then comes the breakfast, at which it is generally found necessary to excite the appetite by some article of pungent flavour, either sweet, salt, or savoury, whether digestible or not, it is not very customary to consider, accompanying it by either hot tea or coffee; and then follows, in the great majority of cases, many sedentary hours, which, however well employed they may be in other respects, have very rarely the preservation of health for their object. And then the ladies go to luncheon. This meal varies considerably in different families; but let *all* English ladies ask themselves whether they do not think this meal rather a more generous one than the preservation of health requires?

Now comes the time for exercise, to such as do not prefer sitting at home to receive visits instead, and they go out, either to walk a little, drive a little, or, some few of them, to ride a little, and then they come home a good deal tired, for they have probably talked, and perhaps *shopped* with considerable energy; and, till the hour of dressing for dinner, they either lie upon a sofa, or sit deep sunk in a well-stuffed arm-chair.

Dinner is the next scene, and that too, as we all know, varies prodigiously. But of all the ladies in London who sit down to dinner, how many are there who are regulated in their choice of what they eat solely by the consideration of what is wholesome? And they take wine; little or much, but they all take wine—and afterwards, the greater number take also a cup of strong hot coffee.

At about an hour before midnight, that portion of our countrywomen who are happy enough to "move in good society" have probably finished the important and rather fatiguing task of dressing themselves for the fourth time, and, having taken a little hot tea, they set forth to spend two or three hours, or it may be many more, in a highly heated atmosphere, composed in some degree, certainly of the material necessary to the process of breathing, but mingled with a variety of exhalations which need not be analysed, in order to convince us, after a little experience, that the human lungs might find themselves more com-

pletely at ease without them; and after taking a little ice, and, it may be, a little champagne, they come home and go to bed in a room that their faithful servants have made as close as possible, and, after the slight use of a little more warm water, they lie down and sleep as long as they can.

Now, then, let us take one of these ladies, and place her at Gräffenberg. I will in no way exaggerate any of the features of the life she leads there, but only observe, that if she be a patient of Dr. Preissnitz, no choice is allowed her. The example I will take shall be a person of the same class, age, and condition as before. I will not suppose her to be afflicted by any worse complaint than what is pretty sure to overtake, in a greater or less degree, every one who has led, from early youth to middle age, such a life as I have been describing.

Having achieved the journey, settled herself in her lodging, seen the doctor, and hired the bath-woman, she will go on as follows.

She will get out of bed at four o'clock, A. M., and be immediately enveloped by her attendant in a sheet that has been dipped into fresh cold water, which has been wrung from it just sufficiently to prevent its running about her in streams. This wet sheet is wrapped closely round her, and the bath-woman rubs her briskly on the outside of it, with both her hands, the patient herself being also enjoined to rub herself in the same manner, as actively as possible. The lady is then left to herself, and employs a few moments in fanning her wet person with the sheet, the room being made to receive the while as much fresh air as possible, and the moisture upon her skin dries so rapidly during this process, that very little subsequent wiping is necessary. The bath-woman then wraps a thick wet cloth about three yards long round her waist, and another over it, of the same texture and dimensions, but dry. This is the only stay she is permitted to wear. She is strongly recommended to wear no stockings. . . . The flannel garment usually worn by English women is strictly forbidden, and as light a petticoat and gown as can be procured, form her whole dress.

Having invested herself with all rapidity in this, (no

combing and brushing of the hair can take place till afterwards,) she sallies forth, with a light sun-bonnet on her head, and a drinking-glass in her hand. She walks briskly to a cold fresh spring, fills her glass once, twice, thrice, perhaps, and swallows the limpid contents. She then mounts, at her best speed, some of the steep hills which surround the place, and whenever she meets with a font by the way, she stops, fills her ever-ready glass, and drinks.

This walking must continue till eight o'clock, when she returns to breakfast, carefully made ready—for, trust me, she is furiously hungry—and finds black or brown bread, (if she can eat it, but if not, she is indulged with white,) a huge jug of fresh milk, butter *à discrétion*, and as many of the delicious wild strawberries that are native here as she can eat. At nine she is again enveloped in a wet sheet, and the moisture of her bandage is renewed, and then she is recommended to lie down and go to sleep; and I have heard, as yet, of no insomnolency obstinate enough to resist this prescription. The sleep is sound, quiet, and most deliciously refreshing. On awaking from this sleep, it is, if I mistake not, in the common order of the day's work to take what is called the packed, or sweating bath; but, of course, the applications vary according to individual cases.

The packing process consists in being rolled in a wet sheet, and very tightly enveloped in a very thick blanket over it. You are then left to lie, bound hands and feet, for about twenty minutes, and perspiration more or less copious generally ensues. The patient is then unbound, and plunged into a cold bath, and then sent to walk for half an hour, but is forbidden to walk in the sun. The douche, which is the severest of all the applications of cold water, and which is not at once administered to persons unused to this sort of discipline, is usually given after the packing.

All this pretty well occupies the time till one o'clock, at which hour everybody dines. "Sancho's dread doctor and his wand" are *not* there, excepting, indeed, at the side-board. No beverage but water is permitted; but, with the exception of soup, I cannot find that any viands

are forbidden; and the great physician seems, I think, to pride himself upon the perfectly healthy powers of digestion which his system produces. His resolute forbiddance of soup is not from any danger of its being rich, but he permits not the introduction of any warm fluid into the stomach.

After dinner, the patients may sleep again if they want it, or if they prefer walking they may walk, provided always they do not walk in sunshine. At four, another wet sheet is administered, followed by a newly-wetted bandage; and then they walk again, and amuse themselves if they like by seeking some of the daily dozen of glasses of water which they are enjoined to drink, at more distant springs; but at seven they must return to eat—the materials of the meal being the same as at breakfast; and after this they are recommended to climb more hills for an hour or two.

At ten, as far as I am able to judge, everybody goes to bed, and that all those subjected to the treatment are ready for it is by no means surprising, for it is certainly very fatiguing. But the fatigue is of a nature that appears to ensure the most delightful sleep to all who endure it.

Is not this statement sufficient to prove that Dr. Preissnitz assumes and exercises more power over his patients than the mere use of cold water can give him? No one that has ever taken a cold bath, either in river or sea, but must have been aware that the immersion produced a very powerful, and, generally, a very delightful sensation, and that it is likely to produce very decided effects upon the health. But I know no one, excepting among the patients of Dr. Preissnitz, who has been induced to break through all the artificial habits of social life, in order to try if he might not feel better if he abandoned himself to the agency of air, water, exercise, and sleep, instead.

I am far, however, from meaning to say that I consider the superintending watchfulness of such an acute and experienced experimentalist as Dr. Preissnitz as of no value. All that I have heard of his practice here, convinces me of the contrary; and had I a friend afflicted by any chronic complaint of long standing, or suffering

from the effects of any paralytic affection, or, in short, from any other infirmity of a nature either alarming or doubtful, I would certainly, *were it possible*, have him transported to Freiwalden, and placed under the care of Dr. Preissnitz. But as the transporting a sick man to a place so remote from the greater part of Europe as Freiwalden in Silesia can never be an easy, and may often be an impossible task, I have dwelt upon such parts of the Gräffenberg curative process as I conceive might be practised at home.

The result of all I have seen and heard of Dr. Preissnitz and his practice, has been to inspire me not only with deep respect, but most sincere admiration also.

First the comforting, and then the healing, qualities of cold water, "were borne in upon the mind" of Dr. Preissnitz, while he was himself suffering from the effects of a severe accident. He was then quite a youth, but appears at once to have been struck by the importance of the discovery he had made. When a man is thoroughly convinced of a truth, and earnestly desirous of propagating it, he generally grows eloquent; and among his friends and equals, (the peasants of Gräffenberg and Freiwalden,) Dr. Preissnitz obtained sufficient influence to make many of them submit to his dicipline. By degrees his curative attempts became sufficiently famous to attract the attention of the curé of the parish; and the good man thought it his duty to denounce from the pulpit a system that owed its invention either to fraud or folly, and its success to ignorance and credulity.

His cures went on, however, notwithstanding.

At length the curé himself fell sick of a violent fever, and was given over by three physicians, who had been summoned from different parts of the country to attend him, and the last religious consolations were bestowed on him. After this awful ceremony was ended, and his reverend confessor departed, the curé despatched a messenger to the house of the peasant Preissnitz, requesting his attendance. He came, and the dying curé asked him if he thought he could save him. Preissnitz declared himself ready to try; and in a marvellously short time the patient was well enough to address to his parishioners,

from the pulpit, a recantation of all his errors on the subject of cold water. The good curé is still alive and in excellent health, and has ever since been one of the most strenuous advocates of the system, and also one of the most cordial friends of the inventor. This was the first patient he ever had above the rank of a peasant.

But things are greatly changed with him now. Last year the Archduke François Charles, heir presumptive to the imperial throne of Austria, paid him a most flattering visit. Those who witnessed the meeting, declare it to have been extremely interesting. The Archduke's first words, as he cordially extended his hand to the rustic philosopher, were, "There is but one Preissnitz;" while the man of conscious genius received it, not without emotion—far from it—but with a sort of modest composure, equally remote both from audacity and shyness, and which seemed to show an equally just appreciation of his illustrious visitant and of himself. This year the Emperor has commanded that a medal should be struck in his honour; and we were fortunate enough to be at Gräffenberg the day on which the Governor of Silesia presented it to him. The ceremony took place in the Town Hall, and high mass was afterwards performed in the church upon the occasion. In the evening a ball was given by the doctor to *all* his patients; the fine, or, at least, the finest folks, being received in the great dining-room of the establishment, and the humbler division of the company in another large room in a different part of the building. The good docter looked very gay and very happy; and his broad gold medal, suspended by a red ribbon, was gazed at with applause by (*on dit*) above five hundred persons. He has a nice-looking, quiet-mannered little wife, and six daughters; the eldest a pretty-looking girl, about eighteen. It is said that he very deeply regrets the not having a son, to whom he might impart the experience of his life, and his inferences from it. We are assured that there is no person upon whom he has, as yet, bestowed this valuable confidence; but that, on the contrary, he is by no means communicative on the subject to those who have endeavoured to lead him to converse upon it.

Nevertheless, he is said to have been heard repeatedly to express regret that his system must die with him, because he knew no one who would be capable of carrying it on.

In my opinion, very great and universal benefit might be derived from the visits of intelligent, (*and if possible*) unprejudiced, professional men of all countries, to the spot. They must, of course, be able to speak German; and if intelligent questioners, and intelligent lookers-on, for a year or two, I am greatly inclined to think that they would be able to carry away all that it was important they should know. Nobody living can be further than I am from wishing to deny that Preissnitz is a man of genius; but I do not feel it possible to conceive that he can, correctly speaking, be termed a man of science. That he has carefully obtained the result of many ingenious experiments, cannot be doubted; and this is knowledge, to a certain extent. He is not now, I believe, much above fifty years old, and he may, and I trust he will, go on

> "Till old experience doth attain
> To something of prophetic vein."

But even this cannot strictly deserve the name of science, as we have been accustomed to hear it used. He knows that, under certain circumstances, if he does so and so, such and such will be the results; but as to the why and the wherefore, I suspect he neither knows, nor has sought, by help of instruction, to know much. He can write his own name, they say, fairly and clearly, but beyond this he does not use his pen—keeping a secretary, who receives and answers all letters for him.

It is said, too, that he reads, but *not with facility;* education having been, during his younger days, much less advanced among the subjects of the Austrian empire than it is at present. And thus knowledge is—

> ——— "at one entrance,"

and that a most important one—"quite shut out." He reasons, I am told, when undertaking to defend (not to *explain*, for that he never does) his system; but it is not, by what I hear, in a very scientific vein. For instance,

I am told, that when particularly expansive, he has said, "Providence gives us nothing that is not necessary to us. Why do streams of fresh clear water flow so copiously over the earth?" I perfectly agree with him in his proposition, and so do many wiser folks; and when the world is a little older, it will probably become more generally of the same opinion than it is at present; but nevertheless, this sort of reasoning will not make a safe physician, as might easily be proved by pushing the same sort of argument in different directions.

I believe Preissnitz to be a WONDERFULLY clever man, and I think he has made a great hit. Woe to mankind, if there be no men of science to be found, with minds sufficiently eager to receive all knowledge, to make them seize upon it, let it come whence, and how it may! Accident has led to the discovery of some of the most useful mysteries of nature known to man; and what matters it whether the accident happen to a Silesian peasant or to a doctor of medicine?

That the application of cold water, in various ways, to the human body DOES produce effects which were never dreamed of till the experiments of Preissnitz led to their discovery, is already much too well known for any man to contradict with impunity. It may, indeed, be possible to collect a few profoundly ignorant individuals in a corner, who might listen to such doubts without laughing at the man who uttered them; but no one can go forth into the world with such wilful falsehood, or benighted ignorance, on his lips, without meeting the reward he merits. This state of things the discoverer has lived to see; but we may be very sure that much remains behind, which his destined day of life will not be long enough to show him. When the strength and applicability of steam was first hit upon, who guessed that it would, in a few years, enable all the world to traverse earth and ocean?

But the powers and principalities, the scientific bodies, and the learned associations, above all the physicians of the earth, (not the druggists, "*bien entendu*,") will do greatly less than their duty if they permit Preissnitz to die before they have taken care that trustworthy eye-witnesses have been placed in a condition to report what he is doing.

The only reasonable opposition which I can imagine to the careful examination of this system must come from the compounders and dispensers of drugs; for so completely has the Gräffenberg sage thrown physic to the dogs, that I already feel, though not one of his patients, that I shall never again be induced to take a dose till I have first tried the effect of a few glasses of cold water.

But were such learned deputations as I have alluded to sent hither for the purpose of testing the value of the experiments going on, I own I think they would have one great difficulty to contend with, and that no less a one than the danger of not preserving their gravity, while engaged upon an inquiry of the very gravest kind.

But let me not be misunderstood. So far from thinking any one of these experiments a subject of mockery, I almost doubt whether any other experiments are going on at this hour in any part of the world, relative to natural science, which I could feel to be of as great importance to the human race. Oh, no! It is not the prescriptions or the experiments of Dr. Preissnitz which would provoke the mirth I speak of, but the incredibly grotesque style in which the various patients set themselves to profit by the cure they have come so far to seek.

These patients are collected from pretty nearly all the nations of the earth; and these new and startling prescriptions are likely enough to effect the imagination, and even the practical common sense, differently in different cases.

We have here, at this moment, Austrians, Bavarians, Bohemians, Silesians, Hungarians, Prussians, Lombards, Sardinians, Romans, Tuscans, Spaniards, Poles, Russians, Turks, French, Americans, and—need I add—ENGLISH, (in much greater numbers than the natives of any other country, unless all who boast the German language as their mother tongue are to be accounted one people.)

It must not be supposed, however, that this grotesqueness, in the general effect produced by the Gräffenberg and Freiwalden company, is occasioned by any striking differences of national costume; *that* is wholly and entirely lost sight of, in general obedience to the orders of the great physician; but the sort of universal licence and

individual whim which this prescribed abdication of ordinary dress leads to must really be seen to be believed. To account for this, it must be remembered that the great majority of the company consists of persons who have left their homes, and consented to relinquish all the usual comforts of life, in the hope of recovering or improving their health. This object, for the time being, is very rationally the paramount purpose and occupation of their existence—all minor considerations, such as conformity to the fashion of the day, or even to the ordinary style of appearance usually adopted by persons of their age, country, class, and condition, are wholly set aside, and if not actually forgotten, are only remembered as furnishing an amusing contrast with their present entire freedom from all such restraint.

Then come the fun and fancy, dictated by whim, liberty, and high spirits—for somehow or other, despite the entire absence of all ordinary sources of amusement, the great majority of the patients do appear to be in very high spirits—and this fun and fancy display themselves in exaggerating the prescriptions of the doctor as to light clothing. The appearance of the men, gentle and simple, has something so wild in it, that even yet I can scarcely get over my first impression, that they are persons escaped from a lunatic asylum.

Not only are they without cravats, but with their collars and the breasts of the shirts thrown wide open, as if a panting necessity for air at every pore compelled them to abandon all thoughts of common decency. No gloves are on their hands, no stockings on their legs, no hats on their heads; no coats, no waistcoats, have they, but for the most part, a sort of coarse-looking garment, made more like a little short carter's frock than anything else which I can recollect to compare it to. Sometimes this is of one colour, and sometimes of another, but generally varying between the ordinary hue of a Cumberland *maud*, and a tint as pale as that of brown-holland. The open shirt that is displayed under this is sometimes white, but much oftener coloured. The hair (not, indeed, the beard; that seems always left to grow *à discrétion*) is cut as short as that of a convict.

In addition to all this, the pace at which they walk, nay, every movement they make, seems propelled by a preternatural degree of activity, and there is often a bright freshness of complexion observable, that suggests the idea of a vigorous state of body and a rapid circulation of blood. This describes the general appearance of the male part of the company whenever you meet them; but by resorting to the most frequented paths, at the hours of the principal water-exercises, you are sure to encounter a multitude of men and women, who, in conformity to the discipline enjoined, are straining every nerve to assist the effects of the remedy by active movement; and it is then, most especially, that the majority of those you meet, especially of the male sex, have the air of having escaped from their keepers.

In that charming, but almost forgotten little volume, entitled "The Miseries of Human Life," there is a scene descriptive of the agony of zeal with which dancers who have just indulged in taking an ice, rush onward through the dance in the hope of preventing any danger from it, and exclaiming as they go—"Hands across, for the love of mercy! Down the middle, in the name of Heaven!" Now, though the ladies and gentlemen of Gräffenberg and Freiwalden who have just taken their douche, or their sitting bath, or their wet sheet, do not thus exclaim, it is impossible not to read the same object and the same anxiety in their eyes and gestures; and even if the selfish fear of being knocked down did not cause one to step aside, I really hope that we should take care not to occasion the delay of a quarter of a second in their course, from mere humanity.

As to the dress of the ladies, it is much less remarkable than that of the gentlemen. The "Gräffenberg stockings," which is the phrase in use for describing the wearing no stockings at all, being the most remarkable visible feature of it; but when we recollect that they are all a petticoat *minus*, and that, instead of a corset, they have three yards of wet linen twisted round them, we cannot be much surprised if, somehow or other, they do not altogether look like "folks of this world."

An observation was made to me the other day by a

gentleman who has been for many months an inmate of the Gräffenberg establishment, containing, as we are told, above two hundred patients, which struck me as important. This gentleman is a military man, long in active service, and therefore long accustomed to living among large assemblies of men, and in the habit of constant intercourse with them; but never, he said, had he seen so many human beings thrown together whose tempers seemed so uniformly even and amiable.—"There are in that house," said he, "persons suffering under almost every imaginable kind of disease, yet they are always good-humoured, always cheerful."

If this be so, and I have every reason in the world for believing that he spoke the truth, the observation is as much in favour of the water-cure, as any that I remember to have heard.

The Valhalla.

THERE are, I believe, many persons besides myself who, hoping to improve their health, or increase their enjoyment, take the trouble of exchanging the climate of their native England for the brighter one of Italy, every winter; and to such, a few hints as to the manner in which this may be done with the least annoyance may be useful.

Somebody—I cannot remember who, where, or when—has pithily exclaimed, "I would rather be d——d than pitied." Without going quite so far as this energetic personage, I am ready to confess that, in moderation, I share the feeling, and therefore that I have been occasionally vexed in spirit by the compassion expressed for me by sundry of my friends and acquaintance, on account of the tedious, troublesome turmoil of travelling, which I yearly inflict on myself by my passings and repassings of the rocky barrier, which so many contemplate from youth to age in their mind's eye, without ever venturing to traverse once.

Let me assure them, in the consolatory words of Prospero, that they may "tell their piteous hearts there's no harm done."

I am quite ready to confess, however, that did I pack myself up twice a year, with every faculty locked up like the contents of my travelling trunk, save only that of consciousness that I was in the act of rolling along, my condition would not only be indeed pitiable, but my conviction that it was so such as to ensure my gratitude to all who would bestow a sigh upon my sufferings. But I manage better than that; and although my migrations

have of late years been as faithful as those of the swallow, and the terminus of each transit more precisely the same than we have any good right to proclaim his to be, yet I have contrived to make almost as many picturesque tours, and for the most part various too, as I have made journeys, so that the recollections of these pitied journeyings are among the most delightful of my existence.

"La belle France!" Our gay-tempered neighbours have appropriated this pleasant epithet so long and so steadily, that it now really seems to belong to them by right, and that one should be guilty of as much injustice as incivility in disputing their claim to it. In truth, if they would be contented to accept as true the often-made assertion that PARIS was FRANCE, nobody perhaps would feel inclined to dispute the point, for it is very certain that, in its way, Paris is one of the most beautiful cities in the world. It is neither so immense, nor so redolent of wealth as London; nor so poetically interesting as Florence; nor so venerable as Rome; nor so bright as Naples; but it is beautiful—gaily, splendidly, and variously beautiful—and I, in my turn, should be seized with a compassionate fit, did I meet with any one incapable of enjoying—ay, and keenly, too—the graceful vagaries of its mosaic embellishments.

But, having once heroically made up your mind to drive through the barrier, leaving the famous walls, and all the pretty glittering things contained within them, behind you, I must candidly confess that, in my opinion, you leave most of the beauty of "la belle France" behind you also. In fact, considering the great extent, and the good clear atmosphere of the country, it is quite extraordinary that there should be so little in France (out of Paris) which is likely to check the speed of a passing traveller.

The churches, some few of them at least, make an exception; but as to scenery, there is scarcely a single county in our little empire of islands, that might not show spots of greater picturesque beauty than the whole of the broad "belle France" could furnish throughout her whole enormous territory. Even the fine old towns, of which there are very many deserving the close attention

of the learned antiquary, are, for the most part, so much less striking as to picturesque effect than those of Flanders and Germany, that they rarely suggest themselves to the memory of persons familiar with these latter, as specimens of this peculiar species of beauty.

In truth, the long leagues of France constitute "the rub" of an English traveller's journey to Italy; but railroads are becoming every day more and more epidemic, and France, though of late she seems to have been too deeply occupied by her celebrated specimen of Chinese rivalry in the wall line, to pay much attention to any other great national work, appears now to have conceived projects of locomotiveness commensurate with her greatness; and I heartily hope, for my own particular convenience, as well as for that of a few scores of millions of other people, that no symptoms of visionary delusion such as have been observed to attend other epidemic attacks, will be found to have mixed themselves with her schemes. The very idea of a railroad from Calais to Marseilles has something of magical luxury in it, which those only can fully appreciate who have known what it is, over and over again, to traverse the same space, not at railroad speed, but at that of French horses.

But although the French, like a magnificent nation as they are, know how to do great things greatly, they cannot be expected to lay down this line of about six hundred and fifty miles without some little delay, and therefore those whose journeyings southward cannot wait till it is finished, may find it useful to meditate, before they set out, on the best methods of beguiling this wondrously wearisome journey, or else of completely changing their route, and so lessening their fatigue, even while lengthening the distance.

In passing from England to Italy, I have usually endeavoured to lay in a stock of good-humour at Paris, by passing a few days there, en route, and then, desperately dragging myself at one long pull to Lyons, have sought and found my reward by diverging from thence, sometimes in one direction, and sometimes in another, so as to enjoy each year a different excursion of the very highest picturesque beauty, without very greatly adding

to the distance which was still to be traversed before we arrived at our winter moorings in Florence.

But this year we contrived to cut "la belle France" altogether, and by means of steam by land and by water, managed so as to reach Florence without having placed a foot on the oft-traversed soil, "*dove se dicono*, OUI." From Darlington to London, I travelled at the delicious pace of fifty miles an hour, and proceeded, after a day or two of lingering in the Great Babylon, to Dover by rail-road, to Ostend by steam-boat, and thence again, by aid of the same vapoury, yet constant friend, to Cologne. This latter division of the smoothly-gliding process, however, was not performed at the rate of fifty miles an hour. But it was very well for a beginning, and a marvellously great improvement upon the pace at which I had last reached the venerable city, glorious by the visitation of eleven thousand virgins in one charming group, *as well* as by its position on the most beautiful river in Europe, and its possession of a Dom Kirke which by the grandeur of its conception may rival—nay, perhaps excel—all the churches in the world except St. Peter's.

The church and the river together go far towards atoning for this *rather* acute angle on the road to Italy; but when it is considered that most people, besides the ordinary migration from a summer to a winter residence, count it not a sin to enjoy yearly a little fine-weather touring, the *coming round through Germany* cannot be considered as *going out of the way* to enjoy what you may find on the route. This majestic minster itself is quite sufficient to make such a deviation from the direct road across "la belle France" extremely reasonable, particularly at the present moment, when the truly kingly king of Prussia is employing some hundreds of workmen to complete the beautiful and stupendous work. And truly the king "takes up the wondrous tale" in a manner that makes one heartily hope he may live to bring it to a conclusion.

And then the river!

Though I now navigated its "abounding" waters for the seventh time, and had contemplated, since my first visit, the Rhone, the Danube, and the Po, the lovely

Rhine had lost none of its charms for me; and as I stood, despite of all imaginable obstacles, at the very extremest point of the vessel's pointed head, I thought that the successive pictures that I came upon might vie in beauty with *almost* any lake or river scenery that I had ever been happy enough to gaze upon.

At Mayence, I left the river, and reached Frankfort by a commodious little railroad which brought us to the busy and brilliant free city with very laudable celerity; and then, excepting for the few miles between Bamberg and Nuremberg, I bade adieu to railroad speed, and for the rest of my journey sought enjoyment from lingering amidst what was beautiful.

At Wertzberg, I passed a day in prying into old churches, and so forth, and from the fort upon the hill, looked down upon one of the royal residences of Lewis of Bavaria, which was rendered interesting by my being told that our gracious Queen had passed a night there in the course of the preceding week. At Bamberg I was met by my son, and we enjoyed together a week's visit at the magnificent château of Seerhof, formerly the residence of the Prince Bishop of Bamberg, but now the property of the Baroness de Z——. Whilst there we gave a day to the antiquities of Bamberg,—and a fine old town it is. The cathedral, which has been recently, and like all King Lewis's works, well repaired, is a very noble edifice. From Bamberg to Nuremberg we once more fled for a few minutes along a rail; but having reached that venerable museum of gable ends and oriel windows, we were well contented to remain stationary for a while, in order to examine at leisure what is, I believe, allowed to be the most perfect specimen extant of a Gothic mediæval city.

It is interesting to mark the distinctive national features of different lands when they are as strongly pronounced as between Germany and Italy. The sober, sturdy, steady look of the German people, when contemplated after long familiarity with Italy, speaks in a language difficult to be misunderstood, and furnishes a sort of philosophical commentary on the history of both countries, which has great eloquence.

Not many months before I found myself in the great churchyard of St. John at Nuremberg, I had stood gazing down from the Bologna road upon the Campo Santo of Florence. The Italian receptacle for the mortal relics of the Florentine citizens offered to the eye little or nothing, save a large square enclosure of coarse grass, with a lofty cross in the midst of it and a very unconspicuous little building on the one side, which served for a chapel, from the shelter of which the officiating priest utters the last short, and by no means very solemn, valedictory blessing of the Romish church.

"But where are the tombs?" I demanded of a companion who stood beside me.

"There are none," he replied. "Tombs, excepting when erected as objects of ostentation and magnificence for the gratification of the living, or as loudly-demanded records of some species of departed greatness, in honour of the mighty dead, are not deemed necessary in Italy. In the enclosure that you are looking down upon are three hundred and sixty-five pits, sunk deep into the earth. The stone which covers the entrance to each is level with the surface, and invisible except on close examination. One of these pits is opened at midnight every night of the year in succession, and every night of the year the dead of Florence are precipitated *coffinless* into the abyss, which is then closed up again till the anniversary of the same hour on the following year."

"Oblivion indeed!" said I.

"Yes," he replied. "Excepting under peculiar circumstances, oblivion follows death more quickly under the bright skies of the sunny south, than amidst the more meditative, shadowy regions of the north. It should seem that where life is more keenly felt, death is more easily forgotten. The fables and legends of Italy may generally be traced to the lifelike immortalities of the Pantheon, while those of the northern nations are for the most part furnished from the shadowy world of departed spirits. In Italy, if no halo of fame gleams with poetic light upon the dead, all traces of their past existence seem by common consent to be voted unseemly; and, instead of storied tombs to mark the spot where their

forefathers sleep, the life-teeming survivors prefer consigning them to the undistinguishable abode that looks so unmeaningly smooth and vacant beneath us. If you will visit the old cities of Germany, you will find there burying-grounds offering a very different picture of the national mind."

This conversation flashed across my memory as I stood amidst the venerable tombs of Nuremberg. In this crowded and most curious receptacle, every object I looked at seemed to indicate a ceaseless struggle with Time, in order to save the dead from the oblivion which the civic regulations of Florence as strenuously endeavour to promote. I never saw so almost universal a display of elaborate workmanship, and costly material, in any burying-ground as in that of St. John at Nuremberg; nor did the honoured grave of Albert Dürer himself display more successful attention to its preservation than its bronze and marble neighbours.

But of all the sights of Nuremberg, I deem the matchless splendour of its painted glass to be the most remarkable; and to any one who has paid sufficient attention to this curious and now unknown art, to enable him to appreciate its almost inconceivable pre-eminence here, a circuit of a few scores of miles would be nobly repaid. There is much of this mysteriously beautiful work in various parts of the city, but it is in the fine old church of St. Lawrence that it is to be seen in the greatest perfection. The church itself is one of the great glories of Gothic architecture; but of these, Europe (thanks to kind Heaven that inspired their builders) contains so many, that St. Lawrence might be merged and almost forgotten in the crowd, were it not for its windows, which are, beyond all comparison, the finest in the world.

These gorgeous pictures, that seem executed in jewels, surround the glowing choir with an atmosphere of magic light, which must be seen before any adequate idea can be conceived of its effect.

Nothing that is quite unlike all other things can be described; for where is one to find one's parallels and one's similes? I know of none that can assist me in conveying any notion of the choir of St. Lawrence at

Nuremberg, either as to its general effect, or as to the grace and loveliness that comes forth upon examination. The window known by the name of "the Volkamer window" has a sort of poetical harmony in its tone, which may sound very like nonsense when it is talked about, but which very few, I think, could escape feeling with a reality that would surprise them, did they stand before it.

There is something churlish, invidious, and disagreeable in comparing old things to new, for the purpose of declaring that our fellow-creatures of the present day are lamentably inferior to those who have gone before them. I do not like the doctrine which would teach us that we are degenerating, and I really have no faith in it. But to state as a matter of fact that the art of painting on glass exists now, as it did in the days when the Volkamer window was executed at Nuremberg, is worse still, for such an assertion could be neither more nor less than a positive falsehood, whereas the doctrine of degeneration can only be considered as a blunder.

The restoration of the old churches of Bavaria have been performed in a style so infinitely superior in taste and skill to any similar reparations which have been completed elsewhere, (with the exception, perhaps, of some portions of York Minster,) that it is impossible not to feel the highest admiration for the taste and liberality of the royal patron who has presided over them all, and the very skilful and careful reparation of old painted windows has not been the least valuable part of the work; but even while enjoying the delightful transition from ruin to order, which has resulted from it, the not perceiving the strangely great inferiority of the new work to the old would only show that neither was examined with the attention they deserve.

It was probably some chemical accident which taught this lost secret to our ancestors, and it is certainly not impossible that a similar accidental combination may occur again; but till it does, we must be contented to study the effect which mere colour may produce on the imagination from the glass-painters of the middle ages.

There are multitudes of other sights to be seen in this grand old town, but they are, most of them, too sys-

tematically and too well pointed out to make it useful to dwell upon them here; I will, therefore, only venture upon one general remark, because it is applicable to more *free towns* than Nuremberg. Any one who will give themselves the trouble—and it certainly *is* trouble—to visit the dungeons and torture-chambers beneath the Rathhaus, will be made acquainted with one branch of the civic polity by which the power, prosperity, and *freedom* of this celebrated mart were secured.

The secret apparatus by which the discipline then thought necessary for teaching men what was good for them was administered at Nuremberg, reminds one of the many similar preparations having the same object, which are to be found in Venice, whose "thirteen hundred years of freedom" Lord Byron mentions with such deep admiration, while he seems so pathetically to lament that they are "*done*."

The day we visited this historic Rathhaus, the citizens were preparing the great hall as a dining apartment for the Germanic scientific congress, which was to meet at Nuremberg on the morrow; and I could not help thinking, although Nuremberg is no longer a "free town," that if the beatified spirit of the good Albert Dürer was permitted to recreate itself, by flitting about that splendid relic of its earthly inspirations, the triumphal car of Maximilian, so that he might listen to what passed below, it would be obliged to confess that, however much the fine arts and the fine commerce of the free town had withered away since it was painted, there was another species of commerce—namely, that of thought—which had prospered marvellously since its departure from the scene.

From Nuremberg we had an easy day's journey to Ratisbon; and though I and my companion had explored this city with a good deal of care before, we still found a multitude of objects which captivated our attention as effectually as when we had seen them for the first time. Among these was the noble and greatly improved cathedral, which, like the beautiful churches of Nuremberg, has been restored with so much good taste and so much antiquarian learning, that it may serve as a model to all church restorers for ever.

But the sight of sights, and the particular object for whose sake I am now endeavouring to prove that all comers and goers to and from Italy may find the taking rather a circuitous course a profitable mode of travelling, is the VALHALLA. In the year 1837, we had seen this majestic structure in progress, and had then conceived a sufficiently adequate idea of what it might be, to have made us very frequently wish to look at it in its completed state, and, in September, 1845, we achieved this object. Stupendously grand as are both the site and the building itself, the approach is disappointing, on account of the unfortunate preponderance of the substructure, and especially of the upper terrace, which prevents the building itself from being visible from the bottom of the almost awfully bold flight of steps which lead to it from the level of the Danube. Could this substructure be made to receive any tint, save that of the white and beautiful material of which the temple itself is constructed, the defect would be greatly remedied; for then, at the point from which the whole structure becomes visible, the exquisitely graceful form, and beautiful proportions of this glorious edifice, would at once strike the eye, and create the unmixed and unmitigated consciousness of exceeding beauty, which it ought to inspire; but as it is, the temple, if I may use a hackneyed quotation, is the least part of itself, and the effect of its beauty at the first glance is very greatly lessened.

But this sensation of disappointment is speedily forgotten, when the platform on which it stands is reached, for, at that moment, I doubt if any imagination could exceed the reality of stateliness, grace, and splendour which meets the eye. I know no point of river scenery more superb than that which the Danube displays here, nor can I remember anything equal to the widely majestic extent of its smooth and silvery current, as viewed from the platform which surrounds the Valhalla, either on the Hudson, Mississipi, Ohio, Po, Rhone, Rhine, or even in the regal glory of the partially admired Thames at Windsor. There may be, and there are, many spots on the rivers I have mentioned, (as well as on various minor streams,) where rocks and forests give a wild, a picturesque

species of beauty, of which there is no trace here; but as a scene of surpassing grandeur, both from its outline and its vastness, as well as from the indescribable air of majesty lent to it by this beautiful building, I know nothing that can come in competition with it.

All the world knows that the object of King Lewis of Bavaria, in causing this temple to be reared on the banks of the Danube, was to give as immortal a gathering-place as the earth could furnish for all the great celebrities of wide-spread Germany.

Both the idea, and the manner in which it has been executed, are perfectly accordant with all that we hear of this royal poet and enthusiastic patron of art, in every part of the country which he thus seeks to honour. A few such monarchs would add greatly to the value of railroads, by making the lands they rule over worth flying from one end of Europe to the other to see; for such sights as the Valhalla must be seen by all who do not intend to die, and be buried, without having any idea how beautiful a marble hall may be.

Nevertheless, I would fain, if I could, give some little idea to the poor dear babes and sucklings, who are bound for a certain space to stay at home, some faint notion of this splendid specimen of German grandeur—not to mention the especial effort to which I have pledged myself, of endeavouring to convince the regularly migrating portion of my countrymen, that the most direct path is not always the best.

The approach to the Valhalla from Ratisbon is by a drive of two or three miles, the only interesting part of it being that which passes under the picturesque ruins of Donaustauf Castle. This castle and the little town at its feet form part of the principality of the Prince of Thurn and Taxis, who has a pleasant-looking summer residence at one extremity of the town. When last we visited this spot its general appearance was singularly wild and remote, and almost looked as if the siege which its castle withstood so nobly long, during the thirty years' war, were just over, and that the inhabitants had not yet settled themselves again comfortably in their rustic habitations. The growing wonder that was rearing

itself within a quarter of a mile of its little territorial barrier had not, in 1837, greatly affected the air of profound repose which rested upon this ruined castle and its vassal tower; but now the case is different. The Valhalla has become one of the wonders of the world, and accordingly there are one or two gay-looking hotels which greatly alter the aspect of the place, for they seem to stand smiling upon all goers and comers to and from the imperial shrine, in the hope of tempting them to enter, either to prepare or repair the energies which have been called forth, or are about to be so, by the pilgrimage.

From this little town of Donaustauf there are two ways of approaching the Valhalla: the one is by remaining in your carriage, and mounting the steep road which leads to the table land behind the building; the other is by quitting it and proceeding on foot to the bottom of the colossal stairs, which, rising pretty nearly from the level of the Danube, conduct the bold climber to the portico of the temple. This latter approach is fatiguing, but incomparably the finest. The very labour of mounting the two hundred and fifty-five wide-spreading marble steps has a powerful effect, not alone upon the limbs, (*bien entendu,*) but upon the imagination; and the very circumstance which is a defect, when observed from a distance—namely, the disproportionate extent of the vast substructure—becomes, as we cling like pigmies to its surface, an additional feature in the general feeling of sublimity which the stupendous edifice inspires.

I never remember to have experienced anything which much resembled the sensation produced by pausing at intervals in your upward course, and looking down, deeper and deeper still on the broad stream and its banks. The brilliant whiteness of the vast marble surface over which you are making your way renders a frequent halt as great a relief to the eyes as to the limbs, and you turn round with gladness, again and again, to look out upon the wide-spreading landscape, despite the sensation of giddiness which the sheer descent, unmitigated by any species of balustrade, is likely to produce.

Of course, the higher you go, the less likely are you to see—throw back your head as much as you will—any

glimpse of the object you are come to visit. As you climb on, and on, and on, nothing is to be seen before you but the white expanse of huge Cyclopean masonry, which seems, as it thus rears and spreads itself close upon the eye, to be extensive enough to encase a mountain. In this, I will not pretend to assert that I found beauty; but it produces a strange, and almost mysterious sense of vastness, which acts like a trumpet-note upon the imagination, and awakens and rouses it into a state exceedingly well suited to the business in hand.

When the highest terrace was reached at last, and we suddenly found ourselves standing before the double-columned portico of the majestic Doric temple, reared by a king in memory of the intellectual greatness of the vast nation of which his own kingdom makes part, I believe we both felt pretty strongly that we had not climbed for nothing. For myself, I fairly confess that something very like awe mingled with my admiration. The building itself, in its grand and severe simplicity, its pure and brilliant whiteness, and all the graceful majesty of its fine proportions, produced a thrill which it is not very easy to describe, but which it is very delightful both to feel and to remember, and not the less so because there are so few occasions on which it is possible to feel it. We paused for a minute or two under this beautiful portico, and looked out upon the scene it dominates. The edifice, and the spot chosen for it, are marvellously well suited to each other. And then we turned to enter the majestic doors which a silent official stood ready to open for us. The whole scene, and every part of it, is wonderfully well calculated to turn the heads of all who are subject to visitations from that "*folle de la maison*," which, in sober English, we call fancy; and could I at that moment have found leisure to propound the usually difficult inquiry—

> "Tell me where is Fancy bred,
> Or in the heart or in the head,
> How begot, how nourished?"

I think I could have answered, without difficulty, "At Valhalla; a royal head being the father, a royal heart the mother, and poetry the nurse."

As the lofty door noiselessly gave way before the hand

that touched it, I almost felt as if I were going to stand in the presence of the departed spirits in whose honour this antidote to a tomb was erected; and in good truth I believe that I trembled.

It will not do when one wishes to give an idea of any other earthly edifice, to prate about St. Peter's; but in the way of confession, I may avow that the first words which passed between my companion and myself after we entered, were mine, and that I exclaimed, "Except at Rome, I have never stood in any building equal to this." And as I said it, I certainly had that greatest of earth-born miracles in my head.

Nevertheless, I do not mean to say that the temple of the Valhalla can soberly and rationally be brought into comparison with the church of St. Peter's. But there is in both some quality which seizes upon the soul, and rapts it in a sort of dreamy and vague elysium, before the judgment can find time to set about her graver work.

I know that there are many other edifices besides the great *unique*, which I have mentioned, that might be justly quoted as superior in architectural value to the Valhalla. We may look at home, for instance, and find many such. The Minster of York could not be brought into competition with it gravely, without raising a smile. It stands, perhaps, in about the same relation to it as the Divina Commedia of Dante, to the Gerusalemme Liberata of Tasso. Yet, nevertheless, there is an unbroken completeness of beauty *in its own style*, which seems to set criticism at defiance, and which pampers the eye into such a state of measureless content, that it would require a strong and a painful effort to shake off the charm, in order to set about a learned inquiry concerning the comparative merits of something else.

On the whole, perhaps, it is good to have an eye with an appetite as universal as that of the bee, and with the same power of finding sweetness wherever it fixes. But if life were long enough to allow both of enjoyment and criticism, I should like to look twice at all that was best worth seeing, for the sake, in the first instance, of enjoying the agreeable impressions which a gratified eye brings home to one; and then to look at them all again,

accompanied by some learned critic who should explain why it is that some objects, or combination of objects, so greatly exceed some others (of the same class) in their power of producing pleasure. For instance, as a case in point, why is it that the exterior of the Madelaine church at Paris produces an impression of more perfect beauty than the exterior of the Valhalla? And why is the interior of the Valhalla so incomparably superior to the interior of the Madelaine? I can easily imagine that persons of severe taste might think this interior of the Valhalla too gorgeous; but I cannot imagine that any could, on any ground, give the preference to the Madelaine. Neither of them affect to be simple, or severe, and the one which produces most powerfully the effect of graceful splendour, certainly succeeds the best; because the object aimed at is most effectually obtained. But why it is that the Madelaine fails so lamentably in producing this effect, I know not. Perhaps the strongest impression felt on first entering the Valhalla is produced by its peculiar and universal richness of colour, for its proportions are so perfect that its majestic size seems to escape observation.

The length of the interior is a hundred and sixty-eight feet, its breadth forty-eight, and its height fifty-three. This is a vast room; but it is its brilliance, and not its vastness, which makes the first impression. The walls are covered with the richly tinted marbles of the Untersberg, Bayreuth, and Adnet, which, as a background to the white marble of the busts, produces a beautiful effect. The floor also is of beautiful and highly polished marbles in Mosaic.

And having got thus far, I hardly know how to proceed, for I feel quite sure that if I attempt to enumerate all the varieties of colours and metals which contribute to the effect of which I have confessed my admiration, I shall not escape without some pretty strong animadversions on my taste. Nay, I am bound to confess, that upon reading a detailed description of the building before I entered it, I exclaimed rather vehemently against its gaudy colouring. I must, therefore, content myself with referring my critics to the same test which converted me. Let them go and look, and then find fault if they can.

And having said thus much, I shall proceed boldly, without mincing the matter, and care for nobody.

The ceiling, then, is of polished and gilded plates of bronze, dividing compartments painted light blue, and studded with golden stars. The roof, as well as the beams and rafters, are all of metal; the first of copper, the last of iron; and the light and graceful style in which this vast extent is sustained, is admirable. The transverse rafters, required of necessity for its support, descend from the ceiling in the form of three majestic pediments, which, instead of being a desight, are eminently beautiful, and converted into appropriate and very eloquent adjuncts to the whole design. They are filled by graceful and highly imaginative groups, in deep relief, representing the deities and heroes of the heathen mythology. The figures are of metal, partly gilt and partly coloured, but not gaudily—something between white and flesh-colour—and have at once a delicate and rich effect that is very pleasing.

At the height of about two-thirds of the entire walls a frieze runs round the whole building, and the length on each side is divided into three equal compartments. Below the frieze, these compartments are formed by masses of pilasters arranged against the wall; and above it are two caryatides in each compartment, which support the beams. These figures have been very accurately described in print already; but this description, notwithstanding its accuracy, produced such an effect in its detail, that if my companion and myself could have been scared from our Valhalla pilgrimage by the fear of seeing what was hideous, instead of what was beautiful, we should have turned our steps away from it the moment we had completed the perusal. The description mentions particularly their "ivory-coloured skin, their light brown hair, their gilded bear-skins, and their purple and white garments;" and the idea of beholding fourteen colossal ladies thus gaily dight, performing the office of caryatides in a temple dedicated to a purpose so solemn, had something really revolting in it. Even now that I recal these wild, but imposing monstrosities, and remember how perfectly well contented I was to see them there, I feel in doubt whether this is to be referred to the fact that Leo de Klenze, the celebrated

Bavarian architect, who is said to have arranged the whole, understands the *trickery* of colour so well, that he may safely venture to defy all ordinary principles of taste in the use of it, or to my having been so bewitched by the spectacle altogether, as to have neither eyes nor judgment at leisure to criticise its details.

Whatever might be the cause of such indulgence, I gave the massive maidens absolution for all the gaudiness of their attire, and acknowledged the fitness of their presence as a deputation of warlike Walkyrian virgins, whose office it is to introduce warriors to Valhalla. Below the frieze, the compartments between the pilasters are covered by the splendid-looking red marble of Adnet, and in the centre of each is a female statue of white marble by the well-known Berlin artist, Rauch. The middle one on each side of the room is standing; the one on each side of her, sitting. They are all winged, and represent some northern celestials, I believe—names unknown. In front of each group of pilasters is a very elegant white marble candelabrum; and between these, a massive Roman looking arm-chair, of the same material.

Fronting the entrance are six Ionic columns of red marble, with white capitals; and above these is a balcony, from each side of which issues a sort of gallery, which runs along the two sides of the building, over the frieze. But, standing below, you are not conscious of the existence of this gallery, nor is the balcony supported by the columns at the bottom of the room any desight; but on the contrary, by lessening the effect of the great length, it improves the proportions of the hall.

The frieze, which is divided into eight compartments, three on each side, and one at either end, contains a series of mythological compositions by Wagner, who is said to have been engaged for ten years upon the work. They are modelled in deep relief in the beautiful white marble of Carrara, and are greatly admired, I believe, for the poetic richness of the composition; but to enter upon any detailed description of them would be an attempt equally bold and abortive. As ornaments of the noble hall in which they are placed, they fulfil their purpose well.

So much for this immortal hall—for immortal it must

be to the fullest extent that earthly immortality can endure. Its marble walls, indeed, may crumble; but the memory of its erection, and of the noble thought which led to it, can never be forgotten as long as there are men left to remember what has been done by the great ones who have gone before them.

I have hitherto been speaking of the effect produced by the sight of the King of Bavaria's Valhalla; and as far as the eye is concerned, it matters little whose features are traced in the ninety-six white marble busts which already inhabit it; nor whose names, remembered after their features have been for ages forgotten, are inscribed on the tablets above them. To transcribe a catalogue of ninety-six names, plus sixty-four, would be tedious work; and yet the affecting to give a description of this remarkable edifice, without giving some sort of idea of the goodly company in whose honour its splendid roof has been spread, would be worse still.

I believe the arch-royal work of deciding who shall, and who shall not, enter into this Teutonic Valhalla, has been undertaken and performed by King Lewis himself.

There are but few mortals, I fancy, who feel any real matter-of-fact envy of kings and queens. Most people seem aware that there must be something a little fatiguing in the weight of a crown, notwithstanding the exhilarating consciousness of its brightness, and there are but few spirits of energy sufficient to covet such laborious greatness; but of all the royal offices that ever were undertaken, that which King Lewis of Bavaria has performed, and is performing, is the one which I think would shake my nerves the most. The refusing a monument in Westminster Abbey has been found to be rather a heavy responsibility, and sufficient to raise a cloud around the very reverend refuser's head too dense to be dispersed by any ray of the renown which he has left behind him. But what is this compared to a selection and rejection for and against the immortality of ALL "*belonging to the stems that speak the German language*," from Arminius the great conqueror of the invading Romans, to Goethe the poet of Weimar! This is an awful undertaking.

Of the manner in which it has been performed I am by

no means capable of forming an opinion. King Lewis has published a little volume containing short notices "of the lives and merits of great men who have been thought worthy of a place in the Valhalla." I have perused this little volume with attention, and it is, I think, impossible to do so without feeling that the royal author has a high and noble appreciation of intellectual greatness, martial renown, and ecclesiastical pre-eminence. But, nevertheless, there are some few names in this hall of immortals which might have been excluded without any very obvious wrong, and that of Luther permitted to enter, with less danger to the royal founder's orthodoxy, than its omission entails upon his justice.

That emperors, kings, and sovereign princes should predominate is very natural and quite proper. Of these there are sixty-one out of the total number, amounting to one hundred and sixty.

Of warriors, there are forty-one; men of letters, thirty-four; bishops and saints, nineteen. The architects of Cologne and Strasburg have each a place. Three astronomers, Kepler, Copernicus, and Herschel. Of painters, there are nine; of musicians, four; and it is curious to observe how much better known to us are the great men who expressed their thoughts in language understood by all, than many very important royalties who figure in the list. Gluck, Handel, Haydn, and Mozart; Dürer, Vandyke, Von Eyck, Hemling, Holbein, Mengs, Rubens, and Snyders—we seem to welcome these with the interest of personal friendship, while the political and warlike great ones are greeted but coldly in comparison. Another thought that can hardly fail to strike one is, that the *right* which every head we look at has to its place, is in pretty exact proportion to the smallness of the addition which such honour can add to its glory. Whereas, there certainly are "some German gentles" there, who, but for their place within that gorgeous hall, might run some risk of being forgotten altogether.

The Value of a Word.

The following narrative is founded upon facts, and is, I believe, a tolerably faithful record of circumstances which occurred not very long ago in one of the central provinces of France.

* * * * * *

In a small provincial town, which, for the sake of avoiding asterisks, I will call Hauteville, there dwelt, a few years since, a very worthy old lady known by the name of Madame Perron. She possessed a very snug little income, and spent it chiefly in making herself as comfortable as she could. Perhaps, as she had not a relation in the world, she might think herself fully justified in doing so, particularly as she never spoke a cross word to anybody, and did, now and then, bestow a few francs upon the poor. Her establishment was but small, consisting of one female servant, but that one was a host in herself, as she was willing to do anything, and was really capable of doing everything well. If it could, under any circumstances, be consistent with propriety to assert that a maid-of-all-work was a person of genius—although she never in her life did, or attempted to do, anything that was not connected with her said business of maid-of-all-work—I might confess the having myself a strong conviction that Annette Bonvil was a woman of genius. Everything she attempted to do, she did well; and why may we not suppose that if she had attempted other things, things that had nothing whatever to do with the business of a maid-of-all-work, the same result would have followed? This idea had never suggested itself to Madame Perron, nor was it very likely

that it should; but she really was as much attached to Annette as if it had. She considered her the best, and the cleverest girl she had ever seen in her life, and she valued her accordingly.

This excellent creature had lived with her old mistress for five years, having come quite as a girl in the first instance, to assist a grumpy old woman, whom good Madame Perron had not the heart to discharge, although she was quite past the age of useful activity; and certainly the hardest task that Annette, with all her genius, ever attempted to perform, was the keeping this old woman in tolerably good humour. However, she died at last; when Annette felt herself to be fully rewarded for all her forbearance, by being installed, not only chief, but sole attendant upon the venerable Madame Perron. Nothing can speak more plainly for the active industry of this young woman than the feeling that such a situation was desirable, for old Madame Perron was one of the most neat and particular old ladies in the world. But nothing seemed too much for the notability of Annette, provided she was permitted to perform her tasks in peace. So, after the death of the cross old housekeeper, everything seemed to go on well.

But Annette was not only very good, she was very pretty also; and like most other pretty girls, she had lovers. One of these was a young carpenter, who was as honest, active, and every way estimable as herself, and most truly did they love each other. Soon after Annette's emancipation from the old housekeeper, Louis Morel was emancipated from his apprenticeship, and it had been agreed between them, that if his business went on well for two years, they should marry at the beginning of the third. And nothing could be a more decisive proof also of the good character of Annette, and of the high estimation in which she was held, than the fact that her lover had obtained the consent of his parents—ay, and of his particularly well-married sister also, to his marriage with her; for the whole commune could not show a more thoroughly respectable couple than the Morels; their small farm was considered as a perfect model, and their small hoard of fairly-earned profits was increasing yearly.

As to the sister, she had made as good a marriage as it was possible for her to do, without falling into the misfortune of making a match that might have been called a *mésalliance;* for her husband, M. Verront, was the heir and successor of a well-established *epicier*, at Hauteville, and was an honest and honourable man into the bargain; so that Louis Morel was rather proud of his family and connexions, and not without good reason. But they were all ready to receive Annette among them, notwithstanding her being a servant; and this circumstance being overlooked, there was indeed nothing at all imprudent in the match, for Madame Perron had made it well known to her lawyer that it was her intention to reward the faithful service of Annette, by leaving her a very comfortable little legacy. Under these favourable auspices the life of Annette, though active and almost laborious, was a very happy one. Her gay spirits made everything she had to do a positive pleasure to her, and, better still, her gay spirits were the delight of her kind old mistress, who enjoyed her merry sallies and laughter-loving ways, as well as if there had been considerably more equality between them, both in age and condition.

But in every situation there is, as we all know, a peacock on the wall. The peacock that tormented Annette Bonvil, came in the shape of a lover called Nicole Starkie, a young journeyman butcher, as little like Louis Morel as possible.

One lover at a time is generally considered enough by most ladies; but if Annette had been as ugly as she was pretty, and the first word of love ever addressed to her had been spoken by Nicole Starkie, he would never have appeared to her in any light more agreeable than that of a peacock on the wall. In the first place, he was a coarse, vulgar, ill-looking fellow; and what was worse, he was one of the most worthless, ill-conditioned young men in the town. But, as a lover, he was at least constant; for above two years had passed since Annette refused his first proposal of marriage, and yet, not even the well-known fact of her being engaged to another prevented the constant repetition of his declaration that he could never love any one but her, and that if he did not get her, he must die.

As it was impossible, while living in the same town, to avoid him entirely, poor Annette was very frequently exposed to the repetition of this species of persecution, till at length, wearied by the pertinacity with which it was repeated, her patience gave way, and she said, "Nicole Starkie, it is time that I should tell you, in case you do not know it already, that instead of loving you, I love another, to whom I am betrothed, and to whom I will be married, if married I ever am to mortal man."

The engagement of Annette was much too generally known at Hauteville for it to be possible for Nicole Starkie to be ignorant of it; but, nevertheless, when he heard her thus declare it to his face, his rage for the moment completely overpowered him, and clenching his fist so near her pretty face, as to make her draw back with closed eyes, he swore deeply and dreadfully that he would be revenged.

* * * * * *

The first of the two long years had nearly worn itself away, and Louis Morel was beginning to indulge himself with the occasional purchase of a few domestic articles, in order to enjoy as soon as possible the exquisite delight of feeling that he was preparing for his marriage, when an event occurred which converted all his happiness to misery, and all his mirth to mourning.

* * * * * *

Upon a dark and dreary night, in the month of January, old Madame Perron told her young factotum that she felt inclined to go to bed a full half hour earlier than usual, declaring that it was too cold to sit up.

"Then you shall have your supper in bed!" cried Annette, gaily, "and your supper shall be your own darling *soup au lait*, with collops of thin bread, and *une bonne cuillerée de rhum;* and if you do not sleep after that, I shall wonder."

The old lady agreed to the prescription, which was immediately prepared, and being seated upright in her bed, very comfortably supported by pillows, and with a tea-tray steadily arranged before her, with a sort of peculiar skill upon which Annette greatly prided herself, and to which

her good mistress had recourse whenever she meant to make herself particularly comfortable, the chartered favourite began to amuse herself and her mistress, as she had often, under similar circumstances, done before, by talking of her future prospects, and of all the great things which she meant to do when she should have become Madame Louis Morel.

"Ay, ay," said the good-humoured old lady; "I see how it will be. When you are Madame Louis Morel, you intend to turn into a perfect fine lady; but it is not so easy a matter as you think for, Mademoiselle Annette. You are a good-looking girl enough; I do not deny that; but you are not half so delicate-looking as a fine lady ought to be, I promise you. I do not believe, for instance, that my shoes would be large enough for you, even now that I get them made half as big again as they used to be."

"I don't know what to say about my feet," replied Annette, gaily; "but look you, dear mistress! here is a leg for a stocking!" And as she said so, she began making sundry caracoles, which certainly showed off the vaunted limb to great advantage.

The old lady laughed heartily—so heartily, indeed, that she not only forgot her ailments, but so completely tired herself, that by the time her merry handmaid had removed the tea-tray, tucked up the bed-clothes, and drawn the bed-curtains, Madame Perron gave audible demonstrations of being fast asleep.

Well pleased to see her good mistress thus speedily released from her feeling of discomfort, and not much less so perhaps at finding herself mistress of a quiet hour that might fairly be called her own, Annette stole noiselessly from the room, leaving, as usual, a small night lamp burning on the hearth-stone, and failing not to comply with the old lady's standing order of locking the chamber-door, and putting the key in her pocket. This locking her door was a measure of precaution upon which Madame Perron laid great stress. As long as nobody could get to her but Annette, she said she knew she was safe; and, as a good loud bell was hung at the distance of about one foot from the pillow upon which the pretty head of Annette was nightly

deposited, and the cord corresponding with it at about the same distance from the hand of her mistress, there was a comfortable feeling of confidence on both sides that the communication between them was sufficiently prompt and direct, to prevent any fear of inconvenience, either from the locking of the old lady's door, or the distance of Annette's apartment, although this distance was in fact about as great as the size of the little mansion would allow.

So the happy and innocent-hearted *fiancée* seated herself before her little work-table, and indulged herself till the authoritative tongue of the town-clock proclaimed the hour of ten, in embroidering a few more sprigs on the square ends of a certain broad cravat which was destined to hang down over the breast of Louis Morel on his wedding day. And most accordant to such an occupation were the thoughts of the pretty sempstress; for she thought of Louis Morel, and of him alone. His looks, his words, his noble conduct in loving her, poor and lowly as she was, in preference to all the gay lasses who were so constantly setting their caps at him, were dwelt upon with tender love. And then some particulars of a conversation which had passed between them on that very morning recurred to her, and she recollected with deep—oh, very deep delight!—that by having communicated to him an assurance, just before received from her kind mistress, of her being well remembered in her will, she had prevented his ever being reproached by his wealthy family for marrying a portionless wife.

But nevertheless, all this, delightful as it was, could not tempt her to betray the confidence placed in her discretion by borrowing any more minutes from the night for the purpose of enjoying it, and therefore, no sooner had the town-clock, as above mentioned, struck ten, than Annette laid aside her dear precious work in its own pretty box, covered up a bit of burning wood in the ashes, to be ready for her mistress's early coffee in the morning, looked at the bolts and bars of her neat kitchen-door, and then crept quietly up stairs to her neat little bed-room. Prayer and thanksgiving were about equally blended in the nightly orisons of Annette; and rising from her knees, she dipped the rosy tips of her pretty fingers in the little font of

holy water that hung beside her bed, and with a sweet glance of mingled faith and hope beaming from her innocent eyes as she raised them towards heaven, she crossed herself and laid down to rest.

Though the life of Madame Perron's young factotum was by no means one of hard labour, there was sufficient activity in it to ensure sound sleep to her; nor did she wait for it long, for seldom did Annette lay her head for five minutes upon her pillow, before she was fast asleep. In less than half that time upon the night in question, her eyes were already closed, and the lulled senses had pretty nearly permitted their matter-of-fact labours to give place before the vagaries of mimicking imagination, when she was recalled to realities, by some sound within the house, which she very decidedly heard, but which, either from its own nature, or from the distance from whence it reached her, was so indistinct as to leave her in doubt as to whether she had heard the cry of some animal from without, or a human voice more near, or, instead of either, the concussion of some article that might have accidentally fallen to the ground in the kitchen, which was almost immediately under her. For a minute she lay with her heart beating in the painfully vague tremor which is sure to follow such sudden waking; but as all remained still, she speedily dropped to sleep again, while still asking herself the puzzling question, "What could it be?"

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Perhaps Annette did but sleep the sounder and the longer for having been thus awakened; at any rate, some of her neighbours, who were not only awake, but going to their work, while she was still dreaming of Louis Morel, were surprised to see the pretty well-known balconied window of old Madame Perron, which looked upon the little orchard at the side of her house, wide open, while the door of the mansion was still closed, and no bustling Annette visible before it, in the act of making her portion of the pavement look cleaner than that which fell to the charge of any one else.

The first who passed was Dick Withers, the mason, who, though he knew the state of Annette's affairs too correctly

to break his heart by becoming her lover, admired her bright young face too much to miss any opportunity of looking at it, and as he saw the open window, which fronted him as he walked up the street, he paused for a moment before the door, to give and receive the gay "good morrow," which was often exchanged between them. But the door opened not, and he walked on.

Then came a blacksmith, and he too gave a look, both at the open window and closed door, and then passed on.

But the next passenger was a washerwoman, and one, too, frequently employed at the house, and she made a decided halt. Washerwomen always know everything about everybody, but in order to obtain this superior degree of information, they are of course obliged to seize upon every opportunity of acquiring it, and, therefore, la Mère Durard could not think of going on to the house where she was to do her day's work, till she had ascertained why it was that Madame Perron's bed-room window was open, while the house door remained shut. She, therefore, very unceremoniously seized the brass knocker, and gave two vigorous blows with it upon the door. Annette was by this time up and dressed, and answered the appeal of this early visitor with a promptitude that showed that she must have been ready to leave her room, if she had not already done so.

"Good morning, good mother," said she, as, her bars and bolts withdrawn, she stepped out, with the kind smile and laughing eye that cheered every one that looked at her. "What brings you here this morning? This is Madame Monot's day, is it not?"

"Yes, my child, to be sure it is," replied the woman; "but how was I to pass your door, and see it still shut up, while the window of Madame was wide open, without stopping to ask if anything was the matter?"

"Madame's window open!" cried Annette, taking a rapid step forward into the street from which this window was so distinctly visible. "And so it is, sure enough!" she added, in accents of surprise; and then, without staying for further parley, she ran into the house again, and began ascending the stairs. But la Mère Durard was at her heels, and, catching hold of her gown, said, "You

must let me go with you, Annette! I could not go to my work, if you would give me the world, without knowing if anything was the matter with the good lady."

"The matter with her, silly woman! What should be the matter with her?" returned Annette, with a little of irritation in the tone of her voice, arising from displeasure at any one's hinting that her dear old lady should be ill without her knowing it."

"Nothing, may be—nothing at all, Annette dear; but only, you know, it does look odd to see the window open, and you to know nothing about it—doesn't it, my child?" Annette made no reply, but hastened on, and they reached the door together.

Annette's first movement was to seize upon the handle of the lock, which she did with some little agitation, forgetting, in her haste, that the door was locked; and, before she had sufficiently recovered her presence of mind to take the key from her pocket, her companion exclaimed, "And the door locked too!—Oh dear! Oh dear! There is something wrong, Annette!" And so saying, she began thundering upon the door with her fist, and exclaiming vehemently, "Madame! madame! Open the door, then, Madame Perron!" To all which clamour no answer whatever was returned from within, and Annette endeavoured to stop it, by saying, "It is no use, Mère Durard! Be quiet, then, I tell you!" While with one hand in her wide pocket, searching for the key, she employed the other in endeavouring to withdraw her noisy companion from the door. "What is to be done, then?" cried the woman, impatiently; "do you mean to leave the door without having it opened at all? It is locked, that's plain. It is locked either on the inside or the out, and how are we to get at the key, I should like to know?"

"Here it is!" said Annette, in a faltering voice, for by this time she too began to feel frightened at not hearing the voice of her mistress from within.

"What! You have got it all this time? What on earth can the girl be thinking of? Give it to me, girl! You tremble so, you can't use it. I'll open the door quicker than you will, by half."

And so saying, the Mère Durard seized the key, ad-

justed it in the lock, turned it, threw open the door, and entered, followed by the now pale and greatly terrified Annette.

The room was but a small one, and two or three steps forward brought them both to the bottom of the bed, and then a shriek arose from one or both of them that made itself heard for more than half way down the street. And no wonder, for never did a more ghastly spectacle meet the eye than that which the bed presented. The curtains, which had been drawn on both sides of it on the preceding night, were now pushed back on the side next the window, which being without either shutters or curtains, and now wide open, let in a flood of bright morning light upon the bed, and disclosed a sight that might have appalled the stoutest heart alive. The sheets, the pillows, the counterpane, were all not only dyed, but soaked in blood, and in the midst of it lay the pale and sunken features of the murdered Madame Perron. It was evident that she had bled to death; and when the woman Durard seized the bloody coverings of the bed, which scarcely seemed to have been deranged at all as to their position, and threw them aside, the manner of the murder became evident, for the jugular vein had been cut with considerable adroitness, and a small, but very sharp clasp knife was lying under the bed-clothes, close beside the corpse. Could any doubt have existed as to this instrument's having been the implement used for the atrocious act, it would have been removed by the fact that its blade and handle were both absolutely covered with blood.

Whether the piercing shriek with which this appalling spectacle was greeted proceeded from both the females who were the first to behold it, or only from one, may be doubted. Certain it is, that if poor Annette had power to produce such a sound, it must have been at the instant she first beheld it, for the next saw her stretched on the floor beside the bed of her murdered benefactress, as motionless and insensible as herself.

The Mère Durard was much too eager to narrate the horrible fact she had discovered to the whole town of Hauteville, to have any leisure to bestow upon the fainting girl, who was, therefore, left precisely upon the spot

where she had fallen, while the less overpowered washerwoman rushed down stairs and out of the house, screaming, "Murder! murder! murder!" with all the force of her very powerful lungs. This is a cry which cannot easily be listened to with indifference anywhere, but in the quiet peaceable little town of Hauteville it produced a degree of emotion which was as general as it was violent. Not a few females received it with a scream that sounded like the softened echo of the cry with which its first discovery had been greeted; while others stood or sat exactly in the attitude in which the ghastly news found them, as if turned by it to stone.

The male part of the population, however, took the matter differently. They all, or very nearly all, felt themselves called upon, both collectively and individually, to examine into and avenge this most horrible outrage upon their fellow-citizen. The house of the unfortunate woman was filled, in an incredibly short space of time, by a crowd collected from every class and profession; but the cause which had brought them together had something too solemn in it, to permit any violent breach of decorum among the orderly population of this remote little town, and those among them who from position and education were most fitted to assume authority, were speedily permitted to exercise it sufficiently to prevent any unseemly pressing of the crowd into the chamber of death; and this object being achieved, the prévôt of Hauteville, accompanied by his clerk, and attended by two medical practitioners, approached the gory bed, and an accurate statement was committed to paper, of the condition in which the corpse was found, as well as of every object around it.

When they first entered the room, the still senseless Annette was found lying on the spot where she had fallen. The attention of the medical gentlemen was for a few minutes devoted to her, and so successfully, that her senses were speedily restored, and she was laid upon her own bed, with a friendly neighbour seated beside it.

This duty having been attended to, the next thing done was to call forward la Mère Durard, who, from being the first person that had entered the chamber of the deceased

after the discovery of the catastrophe, was a witness of considerable importance. As the reader is already perfectly well acquainted with all that she had to tell, it is needless to repeat it here, but every word was carefully committed to paper; and little as the washerwoman knew about the matter, her statement, together with her verbose commentary upon all she had seen, all she had heard, and all she had guessed, became as important in its result, as it was actually insignificant in its value.

Besides the persons already named, there were about half-a-dozen of the principal inhabitants of the town present at this examination, and some one among them, probably with no other reason or motive than the wish to avoid being totally silent and overlooked, observed that it would be necessary to examine the servant of the deceased very accurately, and with as little delay as possible.

When a dozen human beings are assembled together for some matter of grave importance, the not having anything whatever to say on the subject is apt to create a certain feeling of awkwardness among them that is embarrassing, and when this happens, the very slightest and most unmeaning observation is hailed as something worth having, and it is sure to receive rather more attention than it is worth. No sooner had M. Ambrose Lemaitre made this allusion to Annette, which he did with the grave, not to say solemn countenance which befitted the subject under discussion, than all the persons present began to look at each other, each throwing as much intelligence into the looks thus exchanged as their respective physiognomies permitted; so that in the course of about a minute and a half after the words were uttered, a very numerous progeny of thoughts had been conceived, all having Annette Bonvil for their object.

Now this was all perfectly natural; and perhaps it was no less so, that in the total absence of every shadow of evidence as to who had perpetrated the dreadful act which they were met to investigate, the idea that this poor girl had at least possessed the opportunity of doing it, suggested itself. Whether natural or not, however, so it was. There were, indeed, several who, when the suspicion found words, rejected it indignantly; declaring that Annette

Bonvil was as good a girl as ever lived, and devotedly attached to her mistress. But there were others whom the very warmth of this defence set upon their guard against paying too much attention to it; and more still who whispered to their friends, that in such a case as this it was absolutely necessary that no foregone conclusions should be attended to, but that evidence, both positive and circumstantial, should be examined without any reference whatever to any preconceived notions of the parties concerned. That this was quite right and proper, nobody could deny; nevertheless a very monstrous effect followed from it; namely, that a dozen honourable men all made up their minds to believe it *possible* that Annette Bonvil might have murdered her mistress.

Before the conclave separated, the state of the house, and all the property in it, was carefully examined; but the room in which the deed was perpetrated was the only one in which robbery appeared to have been committed. There, a bureau had been broken open, and if it had contained anything of value, it had been removed; for nothing remained but a few papers, among which, however, was the will of the deceased lady. Some drawers and a press remained open; but little or nothing could have been removed from them, as, though somewhat in disorder, they were mostly filled with female vestments or with household linen. This examination having been completed, and copious notes upon every point committed to paper by the clerk of the prévôt, the self-appointed committee of inquiry separated, the magistrate having locked the door of the fatal room, and put the key in his pocket. In the course of the day, a more formal *post-mortem* examination of the body took place; the cause of death was declared to be the wound inflicted on the throat of the defunct, by which the jugular vein was severed, and the instrument, the small clasp knife, which had been found lying beside her. Finally, a verdict of wilful murder was recorded against some person or persons unknown.

Annette, meanwhile, though completely recovered from her fainting fit, remained in a most pitiable condition. She wept incessantly, refused all nourishment, and seemed

utterly incapable of listening to anything approaching the nature of consolation. To all that was said to her, indeed, she uttered not a word of reply, dolorously shaking her head, in token that everything that was said was of no avail, and only tormented her. In this manner, she passed nearly the whole of the day; but her eager glance towards the door of the kitchen, in which she sat, whenever it was opened by any of the innumerable persons who dropped in to see how matters were going on, showed plainly enough that she did expect some one, towards whom, perhaps, she might not have preserved so rigorous a silence. But the hoped-for visitor came not, though almost everybody else in the town did.

It scarcely need be said, that this hoped-for visitor was Louis Morel, and the reason for his absence was such as to exonerate him from all blame, though poor Annette knew it not. It was a little before six in the morning that the call of la Mère Durard at the house of Madame Perron had brought to light the horrible catastrophe which had befallen her; and at a little before five, that is, exactly one hour before, Louis Morel had mounted his stout horse, and trotted gaily out of the town, in order to attend a cattle fair, at the distance of three or four leagues from Hauteville.

It was seven o'clock in the evening, and *pitch dark*, as such a state of atmosphere is expressively called, when he returned. If he passed any one, therefore, on his way to his father's house, he neither saw them, nor was seen by them, and accordingly entered the family sitting-room, looking as gay as when he had left it on the preceding evening, for no syllable of the tragic news had as yet reached his ears. Within five minutes of his arrival, however, he knew it all; and it will easily be believed, that the state of his poor Annette was the circumstance which, even beyond all the horrors of the dismal tale, made the deepest impression upon him.

"You will let me bring her here, dearest mother?" he exclaimed, seizing the hat he had just laid aside.

"I expected that you would propose it, my dear boy," replied his mother; "and I would have gone to look after her myself, but I was told that everybody who entered

the house to-day would be sure to get into trouble, by being called up as witnesses; and, besides, I know that she has been so surrounded by all the first gentlemen in the town, that I did not think it would be well for me to thrust myself among them. But you can go, dear Louis, and bring her here, if she is willing to come; not that I expect she will consent to leave the poor body, dear good girl, as long as it is above ground."

Louis waited for nothing more, and had traversed the distance between his father's house and that of the unfortunate Madame Perron in as short a time as it was well possible to go over it. But with all his haste, poor fellow, he came too late; Annette was no longer there. It was a good and a kind feeling which made those whom he found in charge of the house, and of the dead body it contained, reluctant to answer his questions; for they all knew that Louis Morel was the lover of Annette, and the sad intelligence which his eager questions elicited, at last, was, that Annette Bonvil had been taken to prison on suspicion of having murdered her mistress.

It would be folly to attempt describing the agony which this news caused to the unfortunate young man; if it were possible to do it, the effort would be unnecessary, for everybody may easily guess what his feelings must have been. Instead, therefore, of uselessly dwelling upon his sorrow, I must endeavour, as briefly as possible, to describe the species of evidence which was permitted to overpower not only all truth, but all probability, and thereby to plunge as innocent a girl as ever lived into the most dreadful situation perhaps that it is possible for a guiltless human being to stand in.

This evidence consisted solely of the testimony of la Mère Durard, and the answers which Annette herself gave to questions put to her. The washerwoman had probably no feeling of ill-will whatever towards Annette, when the examination began; but as it proceeded, she gradually perceived that a strong feeling of suspicion existed against her, and that every word she uttered tending to increase it, was listened to with a degree of attention far greater than any words of hers had ever been listened to before. It is probable, too, that she

herself, as she went on, began to think that all the pregnant questions asked had a great deal of wisdom in them, and that before the examination ended, the Mère Durard was pretty fully convinced that Annette had done the deed.

The limits of this little narrative do not permit my giving this curious examination at length, but it was of a nature to prove, like many others, that circumstantial evidence is dangerous ground from which to judge the innocence or guilt of a fellow-creature. Annette had appeared greatly agitated. She had attempted to open the door of the room, although she had the key of it in her pocket. She had resolutely refused to answer every question addressed to her. The knife, by means of which the deed was done, was one evidently brought from the kitchen, and not conveyed through the window, so obviously left open for the purpose of leading suspicion to some one without, for the handle, by no means of a very common form, was the same as that of three others which were found in the kitchen; but the one selected for this dreadful purpose was greatly superior in sharpness to the rest. The hour at which the Mère Durard had found the door of Madame Perron's house still closed, was decidedly later than that at which it usually was opened. And Annette Bonvil had dropped down in a dead swoon the moment she cast her eyes upon the bloody corpse.

The answers of Annette herself, however, probably went farther still towards convicting her. She owned that she knew a gash across the jugular vein caused death, and as she made this avowal, as it was called, she became so pale, that those around her thought she would again fall into a fit. She owned that she had brought the knife into the room, and when questioned as to its peculiar sharpness, confessed that she knew it to be sharper than the others, and that she selected it for the purpose of cutting the bread thin. She confessed also, after being closely questioned on the subject, that she was aware of her being entitled to a considerable sum of money upon the death of her late mistress. She owned that she knew the place where Madame Perron kept her

ready money, and also that she had not gone to bed quite so early as usual. When asked how the blood which in many places stained her dress came there, her pallid countenance assumed an almost ghastly expression of horror, as she falteringly declared she did not know. There was, moreover, a deep scratch upon the back of one of her hands, occasioned by its having come violently in contact, when she fell, with one of the screws which fastened the bed together. This wound had bled considerably, but it was certainly not her own blood which had left the large dark patches so dismally visible upon her petticoats. The lower part of her dress had, in fact, been not only stained, but in one part almost drenched in blood, by her having fallen where a stream of it had trickled from the bed, as long as the current of the poor victim's life had continued to flow.

These answers were all given with an hesitation and reluctance which made terribly against poor Annette, who nevertheless had not the slightest idea of the object with which they were asked. But her very soul was so shaken by the horrible event, that the being made to speak at all was perfect agony to her. When at last, however, one of her persevering examiners inquired whether she did not expect to be married to Louis Morel as soon as she got possession of her legacy, there was something so torturing to her feelings in thus bringing together what was to her the extremity of joy and of woe, that for a moment her reason seemed to give way, and instead of answering she uttered a fearful shriek, and suddenly falling upon her knees on the floor, threw her arms over a chair and hid her face upon them, as if unable to bear the eyes of those around her. Those eyes, meanwhile, exchanged many intelligent glances together; and though there were many good and honest men present, it may be doubted whether any one among them felt himself at that moment completely free from all suspicion against the innocent and greatly-suffering Annette.

Few words were exchanged among them, and those few were in whispers. "She must go to prison," muttered the most determined spirit among them. "Yes, I

am afraid so," replied one of the most gentle. "If she be innocent," said a third, "a legal investigation will be the best means of enabling her to prove it." "No doubt of it," added another, in a tone that showed he was endeavouring to comfort himself by the belief. "You need not trouble yourselves as to the difficulties of the case," said the prévôt, sagaciously nodding his head. "That girl will confess before she has been in prison three days. I have had some experience."

And so Annette was sent to prison. But she did not confess. On the contrary, instead of appearing overpowered by discovering that she was suspected of having murdered her mistress, the naturally firm and healthful tone of her mind seemed restored by it. It required a minute or two to convince her that anybody really suspected her, and that her arrest was anything more than a matter of form; but once aware of this, her manner became wonderfully composed, and nothing in the least degree resembling terror could be traced in the grave expression of her lovely face. This perfect self-possession, however, did not seem to be fully granted to her till after her first interview with Louis Morel. A little expression of restlessness might have been traced in her eye till she had seen him. But for this consolation she did not wait long. As early as it was possible for him to get admission to the prison on the following morning, he was there.

On entering the room where she was, his flushed cheek and flashing eye might have been read differently by different observers; but he rushed towards the prisoner, who had risen to receive him, and seemed as if he would have taken her in his arms.

"One moment, Louis!" she said, placing her extended hand on his arm, and holding him at the distance of its full length from her. "One moment! Let me look at you for a moment."

She did look at him. Their clear young eyes met, and exchanged one glance.

"That is enough, Louis," said she, gently approaching him, and laying her head, with an air of unspeakable confidence, on his shoulder. "Fear not for me. I can

bear anything now. The inconvenience cannot last very long, I suppose? Only beg your dear mother to send me some needlework. But do not let any of them come to see me; it could not fail to give pain to both parties, and I am sure I shall do better without it. It is impossible that it can last long."

Louis understood her, understood her perfectly. The one inquiring look, the satisfied contentment that followed it; the wish for employment, and the no-wish to see anybody during her confinement but himself, were all comprehended and acted upon without a single question asked.

Annette was right in her conjecture that the interval before her trial would not be long. To say that she was not deeply affected when she found herself placed at the bar under the accusation of murder, would be nonsense. She was affected—strongly, profoundly affected; but she was not agitated. Both outwardly and inwardly she preserved her composure unshaken. Not once, no, not for a single moment, did it occur to her as possible that she could be found guilty—guilty of murder—guilty of cutting the throat of Madame Perron. Had she been accused of some lighter and more possible crime, she might have been uneasy; but as it was, she really felt more anxious about escaping the apologies and the compliments, and the fuss and publicity of her exit from the court, than for anything that was likely to happen to her while she was in it.

The examination of la Mère Durard was long and very tedious. Then followed that of the two individuals who had looked at Madame Perron's door in expectation of finding it open, and had found it shut; and who had taken care to let everybody in the town understand how very great had been their surprise and astonishment at so very extraordinary a circumstance. All this was listened to by Annette, who was permitted to sit down, with the same unvarying composure which had marked her manner throughout.

But when the *pleading* began, when she heard these, to her, seemingly unimportant details, twisted and turned, and commented upon till they seemed converted into

proof positive that it was she, and nobody else in the whole world who did, or could have committed the murder, she looked up and around her at the crowded court, and in the faces of the judge and of the advocates, as if she had just awakened from a deep sleep, and doubted if she were not still dreaming. There was one in the court, and one only, who watched her, and again understood all that was passing in her heart without the aid of words. But for the rest, they only thought that she was beginning to look very frightened, and they thought, too, that it was very natural.

At length the pleading was over, and the business of the jury began. We all know that a French jury has a great deal more to do than an English one. The verdict of a French jury is not restricted to the declaring whether in their judgment certain facts have been proved, or not proved, but is permitted to wander a good deal at large into the nature of the facts themselves, and also into speculations concerning the varying degrees of guilt which should be attributed under varying circumstances to perpetrators of the same crime. The trial of Annette Bonvil appeared a particularly favourable opportunity for the exercise of this privilege. And perhaps there was no circumstance through the whole proceedings which caused so severe a pang to the heart of the poor prisoner as the hearing her love for Louis Morel pleaded as an excuse and palliation for the act of which she was accused; for very eloquent was the appeal which this kind defender made to the feelings of his brother jurors on the natural power of love in a young girl's heart, and the difficulty of resisting *any* means of coming into immediate possession of a legacy which would ensure her immediate union with her lover. This very nearly overpowered her. She rose from her chair, and was only saved from the indecorum of making a pretty vehement attack upon the friendly juror who had so ably exerted himself in her defence, by the feeling of faintness which caused her to drop back upon it. It was more than usually long before the decision of the court was made known; and when at length pronounced, it appeared to satisfy no one.

The friends of the innocent it certainly could not

satisfy, inasmuch as it was so worded as very plainly to indicate that a strong suspicion attached to the prisoner; nevertheless, as, after long debating, it was declared that the perpetration of the deed had not been fully proved, she was set at liberty, with a solemn injunction to open her whole heart as speedily as possible to her confessor, and strictly to perform whatever penance he might enjoin for the sins of her past life.

And with this injunction ringing in her ears, and the figures of many old friends and acquaintances turning away from her, swimming before her eyes, Annette Bonvil walked out of the court.

She could not complain that any injustice had been done her. She had been suspected, tried, and acquitted. The suspicion, perhaps, was involuntary, the trial fair, the acquittal just. And yet she was no more the same in the estimation of her fellow-citizens, than if a thousand murders had been proved against her. They could but look coldly on her then, and so they did now. Save Louis Morel, all looked coldly on her. He, indeed, did not look coldly; no, he looked as tenderly at her as he had ever done in his life, but he looked too miserable for that life to endure much longer.

Neither did his father, nor his mother, nor his sister, nor his brother-in-law, say anything harsh or unkind to her. But, then, they said so little, that it would have been hardly possible to find offence in it. It is true also that instead of going back to the melancholy house of her late mistress, she was taken by Louis to the home of his family, and, far from being rudely treated there, she was told by his kind-hearted mother that she was quite welcome to make it her home till such time as she could make it convenient to get another for herself.

Her legacy was never talked of in her presence, for they all felt that the subject must be a very painful one after the horrible surmises which had been uttered respecting it. But in due time it was paid; and the melancholy Annette found herself the possessor of about twenty pounds sterling a year, which in that country was a revenue to live upon, but with a heart too nearly broken for her to be conscious of the slightest pleasure

from the acquisition. Nevertheless, she was eager to take advantage of the independence it gave her, in order to withdraw herself from what she too surely felt to be the constrained hospitality of the Morels, *père et mère*.

To refuse their son's entreaty to take her in, during the extremity of her distress, had seemed to them both impossible; but every subsequent day had added to the feeling of embarrassment with which this hospitality was bestowed. Nor would it be just to blame this feeling; on the contrary, the indifference with which the ready-money fortune of Annette was regarded, although it was sufficient to have set their son up in his business in a very advantageous manner, ought to be considered as a high proof of their honourable feelings.

The love of Louis for his pale and drooping Annette was as devoted, and, if possible, more tender than ever, and had he not shrunk before the idea of breaking his mother's heart and bringing the grey hairs of his father prematurely to the grave, by marrying one from whom every eye turned away with coldness and suspicion, he would not have waited for the expiration of the stipulated term, but have married her instantly. As it was, however, he dared not, and he did not hint at it, and the miserable girl, having followed the grave, and seemingly reluctantly-given advice of the elder Morel respecting the disposition of her little fortune, took her melancholy way from the house that she now felt could never be her home, and hid her innocent head in the most remote and melancholy-looking lodging she could find.

Let it not be supposed, however, that Louis Morel either doubted the innocence of his affianced wife, or contemplated doing her the cruel wrong of breaking his faith to her; but there were still eleven months to elapse before the expiration of the time they had agreed to wait, and therefore, both from delicacy to Annette, and duty to his parents, he avoided the subject, feeling that the alluding to their marriage at so distant a date could but ill atone to her for not pressing for its celebration immediately; while the naming it at all would have appeared to his parents, in the present state of their feelings, as a stab to the honour of their unblemished name, which it

would be almost parricide to commit. He trusted that these feelings might in some degree be softened before the time originally fixed for his marriage arrived; but be this as it might, his resolution was taken, and he determined, if the state of feelings and opinions concerning Annette continued unchanged at Hauteville, to marry her there at the time appointed, in the face of all his kinsfolk and acquaintance, and then to withdraw both himself and her from its neighbourhood for ever.

The manner of her departing from his father's house was melancholy enough, and Louis, who had ventured to announce aloud his intention of accompanying her to her new abode, determined that he would not leave her without solemnly alluding to their engagement, and making her unequivocally understand that he considered this engagement as binding as ever. It was on the threshold of the door which led to her future home that Louis threw aside the restraint which he had imposed upon himself, and made this declaration, which he trusted would bring her comfort; but her manner of receiving it was greatly different from what he had expected.

"My dear, dear Louis!" said she, permitting both her voice and her eyes, for the first time since her trial ended, to express all the fervent tenderness of her heart. "My dear, dear Louis! you are dearer, much dearer to me than ever, and you deserve to be so, for you have never wronged me by a doubting thought. You need not profess this, my own true Louis, for I know it already, and it is *therefore* that I love you better than ever, and it is *therefore* that I will never, never be your wife. Such being my resolution, Louis—and you have trust enough in me to know that I am sincere—such being my resolution, you must agree with me that we must meet no more. No! no! we must not talk about it," she added, retreating as he stretched out his arms to stop her—"it would kill us! Farewell!" And in an instant she was out of sight, and sheltered in the dismal little room which she hoped would hide her till the wished-for moment came when it might be exchanged for her grave.

She was quite right when she said that Louis had trust enough in her to know that she was sincere. He did

know it, and at the moment when he lost sight of her he felt a pang at his heart that made him turn as white as ashes, and tremble from head to foot as he stood.

* * * * * *

It would be more easy, than either useful or agreeable, to follow these two unfortunate young people through the dismal nights and days which followed these events. Louis continued to repair daily to the spot where he had taken a workshop and yard, for the purpose of carrying on his business. But he did nothing that deserved the name of work; and to say truth, he had nothing to do. People got tired of his indifferent manner of receiving their orders, and of his dilatory manner of executing them, and took their jobs elsewhere. Annette had also a short daily walk to take, for she had her little loaf, and small measure of milk to buy. These together constituted her only food, and having procured them, she rarely left her room again till nightfall, and then she would wander for hours together along the lanes, and through the fields and copses which surrounded the town.

One morning she was going, according to custom, along a retired back street, in order to reach the baker's shop, when she remembered that she had need of some thread, which she had always been accustomed to buy in a more frequented street. But it was still very early in the morning, and feeling pretty sure that she should not meet any one, she ventured to turn from the narrow alley into a wider street. Her way led her by the butcher's shop, in which her former lover, Nicole Starkie, was employed, and immediately after passing it, she had to cross a dirty gutter which traversed the street, and with her long-learned habits of neatness, she crossed it carefully, to prevent her petticoats from being soiled.

She had not observed, as she passed the shop, that her old tormentor, Nicole, was in it; but so it was, and seeing the once admired but now degraded girl go by, he sprang forward to look after her. He reached the door just as she was in the act of displaying her pretty but coarsely clothed leg, by holding up her dress to cross the gutter. The young man uttered a brutal laugh, and

clapping his hands, as he might have done if driving an offending dog before him, he exclaimed—

"There is a leg for a stocking!"

Annette heard his laugh, and also heard his words distinctly. She started, and then, for half a second, paused; it was no longer, for the pause was imperceptible, and she immediately pursued her way, with a step neither more nor less quick than before.

Did Annette Bonvil buy her thread and go home? No. She walked deliberately to the house of the chief magistrate, obtained his ear in private for about a quarter of an hour, and, within ten minutes after she had left him, Nicole Starkie was arrested upon suspicion of having been concerned in the murder of the late Madame Perron.

The rest of my story is already guessed at, and may be shortly told. The last idle words so gaily spoken to her poor mistress a few minutes before she left her for ever, had often recurred to Annette with a feeling of shuddering repugnance at their levity, and were therefore too well remembered to be listened to with indifference. Annette shuddered as she heard them; but the instant afterwards, or rather at the very same, the whole truth flashed upon her. Nicole Starkie was the murderer of her mistress! He must have been concealed in the room during the last merry scene of poor Madame Perron's life, and thus have overheard Annette's boasting mention of her pretty leg.

Had Annette possessed both the will and power to have spoken in her own defence before her judges, with the same energy and eloquence of truth as she used while now narrating the events of that evening to the magistrate, it is probable that the result would have been very different. The effect it produced upon him now was that of perfect conviction; and his conduct proved that, however much he might have blundered before, he only needed to know what was right in order to do it. The real assassin having been safely lodged in prison, an immediate examination was made of all the receptacles of property in his possession; and everything that had been taken from the bureau of Madame Perron, even to the little hoard of twenty double Napoleons which Annette (before

they were found) said that she knew were kept in one of the drawers, were discovered among his things. Among them also were several articles of plate, which several of the neighbours swore to having seen displayed at the old lady's little tea-parties. In short, there was proof amply sufficient to condemn him. And condemned he was, to labour in the galleys for life; capital punishment being very rarely resorted to in the country of which I am speaking.

Have I anything more to tell? Can anybody doubt that Annette Bonvil became the happiest of wives, and that the whole Morel family were proud enough of their connexion with her to have spoiled any girl in the world but herself?

Conrad Reinhardt.

"But your village has a bad name with the Emperor's custom-house officers, I am told," said I to my host's pretty chatterbox of a daughter, at a primitive little hostelry on the banks of the Inn. This said village was Martinsbrück, a secluded little place at the lower extremity of the lower Engadine. One of the rut-and-rock defying cars of the country had deposited us there the previous evening, weary with a long day's mountain travelling, and with admiring the wondrous scenery around—fatiguing occupations both. Our most eager requisitions had been for beds—the more so, as we were to be once more a-foot by five o'clock the next morning; and despite the activity on which I pique myself, I was not very sorry when the five o'clock came, to see from my little window, as I looked out through it from beneath the wide eaves towards the Inn, that the rain was descending in such torrents as fully to justify me in turning round, and re-nestling myself on my pillow. It was evident that we were there for the day, and that we might consider ourselves as very fortunate if it proved to be for one day only.

Under these circumstances, an hour or two lost in oblivion was a decided gain. But with all the good will in the world to indulge in laziness, the full activity of summer travelling was too strong upon me to let me by any possible device delay the commencement of the day beyond eight o'clock. Neither could breakfast, despite the exquisite daintiness of mine host's cream and honey, be prolonged much beyond half an hour; and when that was

over, the rain still pelting piteously, I was well inclined to welcome the ready gossip of the bright-looking, sweet-mannered girl who came ostensibly to remove the breakfast-cloth, but in reality, I suspect, for the express purpose of enjoying a little chat with visitors from beyond the world of her native valley.

She really was as pretty a specimen of a Swiss maiden as ever milked cows on an upland pasture, or rewarded with a smile the victor of a village shooting-match. Educated, too, she was, for she could talk French as well as German, besides her own native *patois*, could read, write, and cipher, spin yarn, make butter and cheese, and work embroidery. In a word, Bertha Weber both was, and deserved to be, the queen of the village maidens of Martinsbrück. A most fierce and enthusiastic little republican, too, was she, and very plainly gave it to be understood that she deemed a free Protestant citizen of the Grisons to be a very greatly superior person to a Tyrolese subject of Austria, who paid taxes to the Emperor, and tithes to the priest at the other end of Martinsbrück bridge. It was, therefore, in reply to some self-gratulating depreciation of her neighbours, the subjects of his Imperial Majesty of Austria, that I used the words repeated above —"Your village has a bad name with the Emperor's custom-house."

"Why then," retorted the little republican free-trader, with a toss of her head, and a flash of her bright young eye—"why then do kings make laws which interfere with the honest trade of industrious folks who, by the favour of God, have nothing to do with kings or kaisers?" This was very like an admission of the accusation; and, in truth, it is well known that the inhabitants of Martinsbrück are inveterate smugglers.

Contraband trade, however innocent the traffic may be in itself, is not only illegal, but really immoral in its tendencies and results, by the very fact of rendering those engaged in it enemies to the law. If eating potatoes were declared by law infamous and criminal, those who eat them would infallibly become not only conventionally but really and truly immoral and degraded; and so it is, and so it must be with the smuggler, the poacher, and

many another offered up by necessity as a social sacrifice to civilization.

But then, it must be remembered that the good people of Martinsbrück are criminals only on one side of the river, and that side not their own. They are rebels only against a law which their country does not acknowledge. The public opinion of their own people is with them; and the bold smuggler, who is an outcast and a vagabond on the Austrian side of the frontier, is a hero, as well as a very respectable member of society on the other. And for this reason I beg to observe that my friend Bertha Weber must be excused by the well-behaved and orderly denizens of Cockney-land, although she may have learned to regard contrabandists and their trade with other eyes than those of a revenue officer. In truth, the topographical peculiarities of this part of the boundary line of Austria's vast frontier, render an effective performance of the Imperial douaniers' duties exceedingly arduous, and almost impossible.

Two good roads, that from Italy over the Stelvio, and that from the heart of the Tyrol, by Brixen and Meran, meet near the little town of Mals, in the upper valley of the Adige. That river, under its German name of Etsch, is here in its infancy; and the road proceeding up its valley in a northward direction, soon reaches the low-shored, ugly, marshy lakes in which it takes its rise, passes along the margin of them, then crosses the Reschen, the lowest of all the passes over the Alps, which here sink to a very remarkable depression, and form the *watershed*, as it is called, between the waters of the Adige and those of the Inn, and thence descends beside one of the tributary streams of the latter till it reaches the great valley of the upper Inn, and the river itself at a spot a little beyond the town of Nanders. Here the road enters the magnificent defile celebrated as the Pass of Finstermünz, making the already majestic river its pioneer through the rocky barrier, and following its more tranquil course onward through the fertile province of the Ober-Inn-thal. Thus the road joins the Inn at the spot where the river issues from a tremendous chasm that its waters have formed for their outlet from the Swiss valley of the Unter Engadin,

and passes, though without touching Switzerland, close along its frontier. The Pass of Finstermünz is known to all the world of travellers and picturesque-hunting tourists. The pass is undoubtedly a very strikingly beautiful pass, and it is celebrated because the high road runs through it. Many a man and many a thing, besides Finstermünz, have enjoyed celebrity from analogous causes, and owed their reputation to the lucky chance of not being out of sight.

Few among the multitudes who annually linger (a little while) to gaze at the renowned beauty of this Finstermünz are at all aware that a far, far finer pass is within a few yards of them. Even the much smaller number who go from the Unter Engadin into the Tyrol are not aware of it. These follow the Inn till they arrive at Martinsbrück; they there cross the stream by the bridge from which the village is named, enter the territory of Austria at the foot of the bridge, through a custom-house toll-bar, in a very legal and proper manner, and then ascending the hill by a pretty zigzag road through the forest, fall into the before-mentioned highway at the town of Nanders, distant from Martinsbrück about four miles. So that a traveller of the legal and respectable sort going from Engadin to—say Landech, would leave the river Inn at Martinsbrück, reach the great road at Nanders, and again meet the river as it enters the Finstermünz pass; and this is the only road recognised by the Emperor and his officials, or known to sober-minded, steady-going travellers, and a very beautiful road it is, and quite bold and sublime enough for the nerves, as well as for the consciences of well-behaved, orderly, law-observing citizens.

But a portion of the river, it will be observed, has been lost sight of by the traveller following this route. The high road, and the law, go this way—the river, and the contrabandist, take another. The mountain, which the road from Martinsbrück to Nanders climbs by slow zigzags, is cleft by the more impetuous hurry of the river, and the result of this turbulence is a pass, compared to which the succeeding one of Finstermünz is as one to a thousand. I rather fear that my reader may think I have been unnecessarily tedious in my topographical explana-

tions, but it was really necessary for the right understanding of the story I am going to tell him that he should, if possible, have a clear idea of the localities; but after all, perhaps, a glance at a good map might do more towards obtaining this than all which description can accomplish.

The passage which the Inn has thus made for itself from the Engadin to the Ober-Junthal, is in truth one of the most magnificent, not to say tremendous defiles conceivable. The river itself forms the boundary line between Switzerland and the Tyrol, for the distance of the two or three miles occupied by this gorge, and the path, such as it is, starting from Martinsbrück, leads along the Swiss, or left bank of the stream. This side is by far the least precipitous. The opposite cliff is called the Nicholaus Mauer—St. Nicholas wall, and a wall it may well be termed, but such a one as human architect never has constructed, and never will construct. At the foot of this mighty wall dashes the raging river, deep and strong, yet angry and noisy as a brawling brook. The opposite, along which the smuggler's path finds its way, is steep, rough, and rocky enough, and there are some points at which the said path cannot be followed without a little difficulty; not that there is anything which an active walker, with a tolerably sure foot, need wish to avoid. The merely traversing this path, however—though the doing so in all weathers, in darkness, and with a heavy burthen upon their shoulders, is no child's play—the merely traversing this rugged path, is far from being all that at all times is required from the Engadin smugglers in order to bring their merchandise to its journey's end in safety.

The following tale, which was recounted to me by my pretty friend Bertha, during the long wet day I spent at Martinsbrück, will enable those who read it to form some idea of the sort of exploits which these men are not unfrequently called upon to perform, and may lead them to understand readily enough why it is that the successful smuggler is a hero in the eyes of the maidens of these vallies, and why he is likely to prove a successful lover, as long as female hearts are to be won by the same means that Othello took to win that of Desdemona.

Conrad Reinhardt, however, as the reader will see, had nothing to do with the heart of my little Bertha; a fact which I state at once, to prevent any misunderstanding as to the source of my pretty friend's emotion. But nevertheless, she told me his history with such a play of feature, and such alternate flashing and melting of her fine blue eyes, that I found it impossible to listen to her without sympathy. I will, in repeating it, follow her narrative as closely as I can; but her pretty manner of telling it, must be supplied by the imagination of the reader.

The articles which form the objects of contraband trade between this part of Switzerland and the neighbouring territory of Austria, are manifold. Salt and tobacco are among the most important; but coffee, tea, and certain sorts of manufactured goods, are also introduced in considerable quantities, despite the vigilance of the Imperial revenue officers. But there is one other article, whose introduction is yet more vigilantly guarded against than any of the above-named commodities, and for which nothing save the daring hardihood of the smuggler can obtain admittance. I allude to prohibited books. It is probable that the importation of such wares, which are as yet by no means in very general request in Austria, would fail to remunerate the contraband trader sufficiently to induce him to undertake the risk and labour of establishing such a traffic, were not a less doubtful one already organized for the supply of more material wants; but a regular contraband trade being thus already in action, those engaged in it are often employed in the manner I have alluded to.

It was upon an enterprise of this latter sort that the Conrad Reinhardt I have already mentioned was employed one dark and stormy night, towards the end of February, some few years ago. Conrad was then quite a young man, not above two-and-twenty years old, or thereabout; but he was already a daring and experienced smuggler; for his father had been a smuggler before him, and he had been as regularly brought up to the profession of arms against the Austrian dominions, as the sons of noble races elsewhere are brought up to the same profession on a somewhat larger and more splendid scale.

Conrad Reinhardt, notwithstanding his particularly regular education, was certainly a very young man to be entrusted with an important undertaking of the kind alluded to; but he was thoroughly well known to his employers, and had approved himself not only a bold, intrepid, yet in fit season a very skilfully cautious smuggler, but moreover an honest and perfectly trustworthy man. And in the valley of the Engadin this too is necessary to completing the character of a good and esteemed smuggler. Sometimes the professional contrabandists carry on a considerable trade on their own account; much of the goods which they thus surreptitiously convey across the frontier being their own property. But more frequently, and especially in ventures of a valuable description, the smugglers are only the kind carriers of quiet stay-at-home merchants, who risk nothing but their capital, while they absorb by far the largest portion of the gains arising from the perilous and most laborious achievements of the poor smuggler. And thus the trustworthy integrity of the hired heroes employed in the traffic is quite as important a matter to their employers as their skill and intrepidity. Nor is it a trifling praise for the poor inhabitants of this law-defying valley of the Engadin, that rarely, if ever, has an instance occurred of one of these daring fellows betraying the trust reposed in him.

On the occasion in question, Reinhardt was to quit Martinsbrück about ten o'clock at night, with the dangerous pack of prohibited wares, which it was hoped he would be able to deliver safely at a certain house in the town of Flanders, at about two hours after midnight. A moonless night had of course been selected for the enterprise; and the circumstance of its turning out a very stormy one also, was deemed by the dauntless young smuggler and his friends as considerably more favourable than otherwise. Not, indeed, that the revenue officers, whose vigilance it was his business and his duty to elude, were at all less likely to be abroad upon that roaring, blustering night than upon any other. Both parties were too well accustomed to the habits of each other, and too much inured to doing their work at all seasons, and in all

weather, to hope for any remission of peril on that account. But, nevertheless, the increased darkness, the increased roar of the river, and the general hurlyburly of the elements, added very materially to the facilities of passing untracked, unseen, and unheard.

It would be an odd spectacle for the peaceable inhabitants of a snug, well-sheltered town, to watch the eyes of love, of watchful maternal love, for instance, eyeing with satisfaction the black, starless sky, and smilingly listening to the roaring waters and the blustering wind, just as her darling hope, her noble-hearted boy, is about to take his heavy-laden midnight walk along the narrow, slippery path that skirts the raging river, whose thunders she can hear distinctly, though beneath the shelter of a distant roof! Yet so it is, and so it was upon the very night that young Reinhardt set off upon his eventful expedition across the frontier.

But before we actually start with the bold Conrad upon this hazardous enterprise, it is necessary to the right understanding of what is to follow, that the reader should be let into the secret of a little bit of the young contrabandist's private history. It is about an affair of the heart, *cela va, sans mot dire.*—It is unquestionably a matter of course, and as love-making is in essentials very much the same thing whether a Swiss smuggler or an English gentleman be the performer, I shall not deem it necessary to enlarge upon this part of the matter. But it is necessary that I should make the reader acquainted with one or two particulars respecting the person who held Conrad's heart in her keeping.

This was a certain Ida Bradela.

On the flank of the mountain that forms the Swiss side of the gorge through which the river Inn rushes, and along which our young smuggler's path lay, there is, about half way between Martinsbrück and Finstermünz, a solitary cottage, perched amid rocks, forests, and waterfalls, but surrounded by a few roods of cultivated ground, snatched, as it were, from the savage chaos around, by hard, bold, and patient labour. This was the property of Ida Bradela's father, and this cottage was Ida's dwelling. It was a wild-looking, unpromising-looking little

freehold enough, but it *was* a freehold, and the Bradela family lived there in content, and in good repute among their neighbours of the valley, though the little rocky farmlet kept its master poorer than the generality of the farmers of the dale. By Bertha Weber's account, this Ida Bradela was decidedly the prettiest girl in the Engadin. All the men were in love with her, and most of the lasses declared that they could not see the reason why—a sort of two-fold testimony this, which sets the pre-eminence of Ida's beauty beyond controversy. The matrons, indeed, except a few who had daughters with pretensions high enough to compete with those of the beauty, *par excellence*, were of the young men's faction, and had ever a good word and a kind welcome for Ida Bradela; for she was a good girl, industrious, modest, and doated on by her parents, to whom she was the very best of daughters. But though the lone cottage of which this peerless girl was a contented inmate stood secluded, and apart from all other dwellings, in the midst of its little rocky domain, it was not at so remote a distance as to preclude its inhabitants from descending into the valley whenever either business or amusement called them thither, and "the beauty" of the Engadin was therefore far from being unknown among the *grand monde* of her neighbourhood. In truth, not a fair, nor a shooting-match, would have been deemed worth going to, had the beautiful Ida refused to grace it with her presence; and both happy and proud was the youth who could succeed in securing her hand for the dance which invariably concludes the village merry-makings.

In addition to the natural propensity of the female heart to favour those of the male sex who voluntarily and undauntedly engage in deeds of enterprise and danger, it must be confessed that the youths engaged in the contraband trade of the Finstermünz enjoyed yet another advantage in their rivalry for the fair Ida's favour, over the more quiet and peaceful swains of the valley—namely, the highly and justly prized one of *opportunity*. The Bradela farm was the only house in the track of the smuggler, between Martinsbrück and Finstermünz, and this threw in their way a very precious chance, which it

will easily be supposed was not lost upon the young free-traders. Neither, indeed, did the seniors of the profession much less frequently avail themselves of the hospitable shelter of old Johann Bradela. They were all, in fact, well known at the farm, and various were the mutual good offices exchanged between its inhabitants and the hardy adventurers whose calling led them to pass within a few paces of its little gate.

Well, to make a long story short, Conrad Reinhardt, the hero of my tale, was at length admitted and recognised as the favoured lover and betrothed husband of Ida Bradela. His principal rival, not so from any wavering preference of Ida, but from the vehemence of his own passion, had been a young farmer of the valley, named Carl Levette. He was of French origin, his grandfather having settled on the farm which he himself held at the period of my story. Now, it so chanced that on the Friday preceding the Saturday which had been fixed for Conrad Reinhardt's expedition, the pretty Ida had been sent with some farm produce on a marketing expedition, to a place at about a mile's distance up the valley, and it also chanced by one of those remarkable coincidences which do sometimes occur in the histories of lovers, that my smuggling hero, having nothing better to do, had also strolled up the valley towards Strada, and had by accident fallen in with Ida, as she was returning homewards from her marketing trip.

Their path to Martinsbrück lay across Levette's farm, and as they passed near his house, the rejected suitor came out, and, unwelcome enough, as we may well guess, joined, and walked on with them. Reinhardt, however, flattered himself that he would accompany them only to the limit of his own fields, and thus managed to keep his temper in good order, and behaved with perfect civility. Thus they walked on together, till, at a gate which formed the boundary of Levette's property, the young farmer, apparently about to quit them, stopped and said—

"Well, Conrad! you free-traders have an easy life of it! How much longer do you mean to take your ease at home here, living like a gentleman, and taking these pleasant afternoon walks with Miss Ida?"

"Not much longer, Carl—worse luck! I shall be off up the hill again to-morrow night," returned Reinhardt.

"So, then," said Levette, "you won't be at the rifle-match at Schnols, on Sunday? You will hardly get your cargo delivered, your accounts settled, and all the business done and finished, in time to get to Schnols for the meeting, put what good-will you may to it. So, with Miss Ida's permission," he added, turning to the beautiful girl who hung upon her lover's arm, "I shall once more have the honour of a dance with her, Conrad, before she changes her name, which will be sure to happen before long, I suppose. It will be my last chance; and I well know, my fine fellow, that I should have none at all if you were to be there."

"And, faith," replied Conrad, laughing, "I would not advise you to count on that with too much certainty. It will be sharp work, there is no denying that, Master Levette—very sharp work, to get my business done at Nanders, and be in time for the rifle-match at Schnols, on Sunday. But who knows what a willing heart and a light pair of heels may do, when the reward of making good speed is a dance with such a partner, and mayhap something else into the bargain," he added, with a sly look into Ida's laughing eyes, which gave the lie to the protest entered for form's sake by her blushing cheeks and pursed-up little mouth.

"Very fine talking," retorted Carl Levette, "but you will never be at Schnols next Sunday."

"We shall see," said Conrad.

"Will pretty Miss Ida promise to dance with me if you are not?" demanded Carl, turning to the blushing girl.

"Promise him, Ida!" said Conrad; "promise him! and trust to me," he added in rather a lower voice, "to save your promise, and provide you with a partner who will, I hope, be more agreeable to you."

Ida immediately gave Levette the required promise, and the trio separated; the young farmer to return to his house, and the lovers to pursue their delightful walk down the valley to Martinsbrück.

The above conversation, though it had passed with apparent good-humour and friendliness on all sides, had

not failed to wound Carl Levette to the quick. He had, by joining the acknowledged lovers, placed himself in a position which was equally sure of producing pain to himself and annoyance to them; and the sight of their mutual satisfaction and perfect happiness in each other, the sort of intimate intelligence between them, and their air of indifference as to whether he was pleased with it or not, had nettled him to the soul. Above all, the sort of defiance which Conrad's words to Ida about the promise implied, and the insolent triumph, as it seemed to him, of the little sotto-voce addition of the successful lover, of which not a word had escaped the sharpness of his jealous ears, sent him to his lonely home in a fearful paroxysm of mortification and jealousy.

An hour of silent, solitary meditation on this scene sufficed to suggest a project of revenge, and finally led him to determine, at all hazards, to prevent the speedy return which Conrad so confidently anticipated, and thus to secure to himself not only the performance of Ida's promise, but such a triumph over both the lovers, as might atone to himself for at least a part of all the misery he had endured.

Carl Levette had not the reputation in the valley of a wicked or spiteful man. He would have been deemed by his neighbours to be utterly incapable of intentionally doing that which, nevertheless, he in fact brought about; and we must therefore hope that the utmost result to which he looked forward as the consequence of the measures he adopted, was the temporary delay of Conrad's return. But in any case, he did that which would have seriously endangered his life in the Engadin, had it become publicly known to the inhabitants of the valley. This deed was nothing less than furnishing information of the young smuggler's intended expedition to the Austrian authorities.

The remainder of that day, and the greater part of the ensuing night, were employed by him, as it afterwards appeared, in obtaining accurate information of the exact nature, time, and subject of Conrad's approaching enterprise. In accomplishing this, he was but too successful, and in the early morning of Saturday, before the earliest

dawn of light, and long before any of the villagers were on foot, he crossed the bridge at Martinsbrück, at the Austrian end of which there is, as above stated, a post of custom-house officers. He was of course stopped at the foot of the bridge by the soldiers on duty, and being conducted to the officer commanding the post, stated to him the nature of his business. It might perhaps have appeared to the Austrian, that so unmotived a piece of treachery might be only a hoax, or a stratagem to cover some ulterior smuggling project, rather than a *bonâ fide* intention to assist the Imperial revenue officers. But this obvious danger was very ably guarded against by the informer's declaration that having preserved the faith which his grandfather had brought with him to the valley, he could not with a safe conscience permit books which were hostile to the holy Catholic faith to be introduced among a nation of true believers. He acknowledged that it was a matter of perfect indifference to him how much salt and tobacco found their way across the frontier, but not so as to the soul-destroying cargo of heresy which he had learnt was to be the object of the present expedition. This explanation sufficed for his purpose. Whether the officer deemed him most a scoundrel for his treachery, or a saint for his religious zeal, matters not; it is enough that he believed his story, sent him safe back across the bridge, and immediately set about taking the necessary measures for ensuring the capture of poor Conrad, and his dangerous packet of anti-papistical wares.

But while fate, in the person of a custom-house officer, was thus weaving in a dismally dark thread into the woof of my hero's destiny, his good genius was not altogether idle, but was actively employed in preparing some web of brighter tint that should make up the chequered tissue of which the life and lot of mortals is composed. And this she accomplished by the unconscious agency of old Johann Bradela, the fair Ida's father; for it so chanced that the good farmer had gone on Saturday to Noberts, a little village between Martinsbrück and Nanders, and consequently in the Austrian territory, for the purpose of investing some money very carefully scraped together, in the purchase of a cow which was for sale there. I learnt,

from my dear little Bertha Weber, the whole history of the causes which led the envied owner of this excellent cow to part with her, but as these particulars are not essentially necessary to the development of my story, I shall omit them.

It may be as well to record, however, that Johann had intended to go to Noberts on the Friday, but Ida had said to her father, "No, father,—do not let us both go, and leave my mother alone. I *must* go down with the butter to-morrow, you know, but you may very well put off your going till Saturday." And Johann, like a truly wise and good man, acted in the manner his daughter suggested. Whether our dear Ida had any second motive besides the one assigned, concerning the solitary condition of her mother, we will not pause to inquire. Now there was one circumstance which, as Bertha said, really was exceedingly curious, and looked most wonderfully like the special interference of Providence. Johann Bradela might have gone to Noberts either by Martinsbrück or by Nanders; in the first case, he must, on leaving his own mountain homestead in the gorge of the river, have proceeded *up* the stream to Martinsbrück, have crossed it there, and so on to Noberts by the Nanders road; or, in the second, he must on leaving home have journeyed *down* the river as far as Finstermünz, crossed it by the bridge there, and so have proceeded by the high road to Nanders, and thence to Noberts. This latter is rather the longer way, but it so happened that it was, nevertheless, the one chosen by Johann Bradela upon the occasion in question.

He had left home after breakfast, and, having passed through Nanders, was turning out of the great high road into the bye-way across the hill which led to his destination, when he met four Austrian soldiers, and with them the person whom he knew to be the principal officer of the customs at Martinsbrück Bridge. He passed on his way, and they continued to pursue theirs. But as Johann jogged on, his thoughts wandered from the cow, and from the various pros and cons respecting the bargain he was about to make for her, to the pertinent question of what these four soldiers with the custom-house

officer at their head could possibly be going to Nanders for?

"The moving about of such a party as that," thought he, "can bode no good to anybody, and may be, for aught I know to the contrary, as full of mischief as an egg's full of meat;" and thereupon he immediately determined to return home again by the same way he had come, just for the purpose of finding out at Nanders, if possible, where they were going, and what they were about. It was nearly dark, however, before old Bradela got back to Nanders, driving his purchase before him. He had been meditating all day about his encounter of the morning, and lost no time, after safely lodging his cow, before he set off to visit a small wine shop, which he knew was kept by a person in pretty constant correspondence with the Engadin smugglers. To this man he told what he had seen, but he was assured that no such party had made their appearance in Nanders.

It was possible, however, that they might have reached the opening of the gorge into Finstermünz, without having passed through the town; and in fact this was precisely what they would have been likely to do, for the sake of avoiding notice, if their purpose was to intercept some convoy of smuggled goods, of the approach of which they had a suspicion. The man to whom Bradela thus told his news was, in fact, the very person to whom Reinhardt's heretical packet was consigned. The good farmer, it must be observed, knew nothing whatever of the affair; but no sooner had the man to whom he recounted his adventure of the morning heard of the posse he described, than he became greatly alarmed. He had little doubt that the official gentry had somehow or other got scent of the business that was on foot, and that these men were sent to catch the smuggler at the spot where the river emerges into the Austrian territory.

His first idea was to hurry forward himself, in order to meet Conrad before he should reach the frontier, and to turn him back. But the reflection, that he was himself well known to the revenue officers, that, moreover, he could hardly hope to proceed unnoticed by the party which now occupied the pass, and that his being seen

there would very dangerously increase the suspicions which already attached to him, and his calling, by drawing the attention of this party upon him, caused him to abandon the idea of making any such effort, and to content himself by telling the farmer that there could be no possible doubt that the party he had seen were sent out to intercept some poor devil who was labouring to earn an honest penny by braving the blustering blast of that dark night, and that if he happened to fall in with any such, he would be doing a truly Christian office by giving them warning that they were watched.

Johann Bradela readily promised that he would do so, and having rejoined his cow, he set off on his way home. On entering the Finstermünz gorge, he again saw the officer, and one of the four men whom he had met in the morning, and not a shadow of doubt was then left on his mind respecting the nature of their business there. Johann Bradela, however, reached home without meeting with any one on whom to bestow the warning which he was carrying in his heart. It was, as I have already said, a very stormy night; the wind was rising, the thunder growled at intervals, and everything seemed to promise what sailors call a dirty night. Bradela's first care on crossing his own threshold, even before speaking of his new purchase, was to tell his wife and daughter what he had seen and heard about the revenue men, and to say that they must keep a sharp look-out, so as not to let any honest free-trading Swiss fall into the hands of the Philistines for want of a friendly warning.

Poor Ida! what a leap her heart made! and how all her blood at once seemed to rush into her face, and back again the next moment to her heart, leaving her as pale as ashes!

She had said nothing to her father about Conrad's expected coming that night. Not, indeed, that it was any great secret, for their attachment was no secret, being well known, and well approved both by father and mother, but though she had not talked of their intended meeting, she had thought of little else since the time it was settled, and had been feeding her fancy with meditations on the interview, which despite the storm, she had promised

herself, at some little distance from the cottage. Some maidenly shyness had prevented her mentioning this intended meeting before, but now she told her father that Conrad was coming through the pass that night with an important cargo—that no doubt information of his enterprise had reached the officer at Martinsbrück, and that it was a great mercy that he had thus fortunately become acquainted with the fact. Before she had said all this, a cloak and hood were already wrapped about her head and shoulders, in preparation for the sortie that was to take her to meet her lover with the important tidings.

It was by this time near the hour at which she expected him, so without more delay she stepped out into the darkness of the night, and advanced cautiously in the direction of Martinsbrück. There was no reason for her proceeding far, and, indeed, as he might have been well trusted as to the not passing the cottage without calling there, it was hardly necessary for Ida to have braved the inclemency of the night at all. But for some reason or other she did not take this rational view of the case, but stepped along her dangerous path with as little fear or care for the rage of the elements as if she were taking a pleasant summer evening's walk by moonlight. At no great distance from the cottage, she met him whom she came out to seek. He advanced stoutly and cheerily along, with a firm step, and an easy, swinging gait, notwithstanding the blustering of the wind, the darkness of the night, the nature of the path, or the heavy burden bound upon his shoulders.

"Ida! darling!" he cried, as soon as he caught a dim sight of her through the darkness and the storm. "I *almost* thought, dearest, that you would not have come out to meet me this night, it is so very rough and blustering, and altogether as ugly a night, my Ida, as ever a smuggler could wish for."

"But you did not *quite* think I should not come, did you, Conrad?" responded his mistress, tenderly. "But now, dearest Conrad, you must listen to me, for I have that to tell which it is most needful that you should hear."

"Do I not always listen to you, my own sweet love? And is not everything you say important to me, Ida?"

"Nay, but, dear Conrad," returned Ida, gravely, "what I have now to speak is indeed important. My father went to Noberts this morning, and has ascertained, beyond the possibility of doubt, that the revenue officers are on the look-out at the entrance of the pass. They must have got some hint about your plans, dearest Conrad, but they shall have a cold night's watching to small purpose. Was not my father's journey a lucky one to-day?—But come, dear Conrad, come to our cottage; a good fire, and a warm welcome, are waiting for you there, and you can take your walk to Nanders as soon as we shall be sure that the path is clear."

Thus did the fond, fair Ida set forth her little scheme; and it must be owned that the temptation to close with it was felt to be strong by Conrad. Not, indeed, that the bold smuggler cared enough about wind and weather to make him anxious to escape from the task before him, for the sake of warm and comfortable quarters; but there were other considerations which certainly did prompt him to put off the execution of his task to a more propitious opportunity; and the thought of turning down the little path which led to the cottage, and towards which Ida's arm, already placed within his own, was most persuasively drawing him, did tempt him strongly. But, no; there were other considerations, which, after a moment's struggle, prevailed with Reinhardt, and made him resist the pleasanter, and pursue the more difficult course.

Could he, in short, make up his mind to be absent from the fête at Schnols, and yield such a triumph to Carl Levette? Could he endure this after what had passed between them on the preceding day? Ida, it is true, would at the least hint of this feeling have willingly absented herself from the fête, and thus, at least, have balked Levette of the promised dance; but could he stoop to such mean means as these in order to extricate himself from the consequences of the promise which he had so boastfully led Ida to make? No; he could not do it: the thing was impossible; and he therefore resolutely decided upon persevering in his attempt to carry his cargo through, despite all the revenue officers in the Tyrol. But how should he set about it? To proceed

by the pass which he knew to be occupied by five armed men would be sheer insanity. He might as well give himself up at once.

Only one other mode of proceeding was open to him; there was another way—path it was not, even for a goat, —and this way was a tremendous one. After a few moments of self-concentrated deliberation, Conrad determined to attempt this mode of passing the Austrian frontier. The attempt was a remarkable instance both of stedfast courage and of stedfast will. It consisted in descending from the spot where he stood to the river, crossing it, and then scaling the wall-precipice which formed the other side of the gorge. To get down to the river, and even to cross it was nothing very difficult, at least in the judgment of one born and bred amid mountains, rocks, and torrents, and accustomed to climb, scale, and cross them in every direction. The difficulties of the task would commence when he should have reached the other side. They were not unknown difficulties, however. Conrad knew the cliff well, and had, indeed, scaled it some years before; but it was in the character of a sportsman, and not in that of a smuggler. He had done it in fine weather, by daylight, and with no burthen to carry except his fowling-piece. To perform the same feat in the profound darkness of a tremendously stormy night, and with a heavy load on his shoulders, was a very different matter, but his resolution was taken to attempt it.

In reply, therefore, to Ida's affectionate pleadings in favour of his abandoning his enterprise for that night, he only said—"Ah, Ida, you tempt me sorely to forget business till to-morrow! But 'Work first, and play afterwards,' is a good saying. Besides, you forget that if I do not get to Nanders to-night, I cannot be at the fête at Schnols to-morrow afternoon. And if I am not there, you know the penalty—Carl Levette will not forget to exact it. Shall I let him have his will, Ida?"

"I am sure, Conrad, if you are not at Schnols, I shall not be there either," said Ida, with a little sigh. "But what is the use of talking of such matters when serious affairs are in question?"

"As to your staying away from the fête, Ida, it is im-

possible, because it would be breaking your promise to Levette, you know, and a pretty tale he would make of it. And as to serious affairs, darling, I know of no affairs that would be so serious to me as the skulking about these hills to-morrow afternoon, while Carl was dancing away with you at Schnols. And the use of talking about it is to tell you, my own Ida, that I mean to carry my goods to Nanders to-night, keep tryste at Schnols to-morrow, and make Carl and all the rest look yellow with envy at seeing me dance with the prettiest girl there. And now, darling, you must help me across the river, in your father's boat, without more loss of time."

"Conrad! dear Conrad!" returned Ida, gazing at him in dismay; "you cannot be serious? you cannot dream of attempting anything so wild? Climb the *Nicolaus-mauer* with that pack, and in this weather! You cannot dream of doing it."

"I cannot do it by dreaming, my Ida, that is quite certain," retorted Conrad; "but to do it wide awake I most certainly will try. So, dearest, just step down to the river with me, and show yourself fit to be a smuggler's wife, by helping to put me across the river, and then taking your father's boat back again to its mooring. We have no time for more talking, dearest Ida, for the night is getting on. It must be near midnight."

It was impossible to dissuade Conrad from the scheme he had thus decided on; so, despite poor Ida's terrors for her lover's safety, they scrambled down to the river's brink together, and stepped into a little boat which was moored to the bank immediately below Farmer Bradela's cottage. Conrad stepped into it; and, as he gave his hand to Ida to assist her in following him, he desired her to tell the old folks at the cottage that he should tell them all about his adventure when he met them at Schnols to-morrow evening. He then seized the little paddle, and, with a few dexterous strokes, impelled the little bark across the stream. It required some skill to do this, for the river was turbulent and swollen, and the current very rapid. But neither of the lovers seemed to consider this as a species of difficulty worthy of being accounted such.

The stream was passed, the boat touched the Austrian bank, and Conrad, eager to be on shore, and off on his journey, tossed the paddle from his hand and sprang to the bank, holding firmly the rope by which the boat had been moored. As ill luck would have it, the paddle, in falling from his hand, went overboard, and was carried away by the stream in a moment, before either of them could make an effort to recover it.

"That is unlucky!" cried Conrad. "How are you to go back, Ida? Here, step on shore, and hold the boat for a moment, till I can cut you a stick from some of these trees, long enough to serve you as a paddle."

Ida did as she was bidden; but in taking the rope from his hand, owing either to his too great hurry, or her own, she failed to clutch it, and it slipped from both their hands into the water. In a moment the boat was utterly out of reach, whirling away down the headlong current. The position of the lovers now became seriously embarrassing. What were they to do? Passage on that side of the river, either up the stream or down it, for more than a few hundred yards either way, was utterly impracticable. The spot on which they had landed was one of those small flat green bits of alluvial soil, surrounded on all sides by precipitous cliffs, which are often found beside rivers under similar circumstances, being formed by some opposing headland meeting the current, and causing it to deposit there the earthy materials which it bears along with it. It was partially covered with trees, while the cliffs which walled it in were for the most part bare. At the lower end of it, a little torrent fell into the river with much rapidity and noise, greatly increased at that moment by the heavy rain which had fallen during the last few hours.

This little *bach*, as the mountain torrents are termed in this country, had, in the course of ages, dug for itself a deep channel in the face of the rocky precipice, down which it leaped and bounded into the Inn; and it was this channel which afforded the sort of goat's path that rendered it possible for an active man to scramble up the side of the mountain, without the absolute certainty of breaking his neck. And this was the track of which

Conrad intended to avail himself. And now that the reader understands the local position of the lovers, he will feel the difficulty of giving any satisfactory reply to the question, "What were they to do?"

In truth, their situation was a cruel one, and the whole difficulty of it was apparent to Conrad in a moment. The river, swollen by the recent rains and furiously foaming forward on its downward course, would have been crossed with the greatest difficulty, if at all, by the most practical and athletic swimmer in the world. To imagine it possible to bear a second person to the other bank, and that a female, was totally out of the question. To make their cries heard at Bradela's cottage, amidst the rushing of the waters and the howling of the winds, was equally impossible. To remain where they were till day-light and more moderate weather should give them some chance of making their situation known to the Bradela family, miserable and discouraging as such a course was, seemed to be their only alternative. But to this Ida would not consent. Conrad had been positive and unyielding in the first part of their ill-starred expedition, and it was now Ida's turn to insist: Conrad strongly urged their remaining where they were till the morning; but Ida answered that he would then lose all that he had wished so much to gain—that he would lose it by her carelessness in letting the rope escape from her hand—that she was quite as well able to climb the precipice without a burden, as he was to do it laden with his pack—that she should perish from cold and wet before morning if they remained in inaction where they were—and, finally, that she was determined to proceed with him.

Perhaps Conrad remembered the pithy adage anent a woman's resolve—

> "If she will, she will, you may depend on't,
> And if she won't, she won't, and there's an end on't."

And, moreover, it could not be denied that two of her arguments, at least, had reason in them. It was not to be denied that they would have had much ado to keep body and soul together till the morning, remaining where they were. And, moreover, Conrad felt that his active Ida

was not far wrong in asserting that she could climb the mountain without any burden to impede her, pretty nearly as well as he could do it laden as he was. The path, if path it could be called, was, to be sure, such as a lowland girl would have deemed about as practicable as a church steeple; but Ida was a mountain lass, and almost as sure-footed as one of her own goats. Then two are always better for such an undertaking than one; help, of the most important description, may be mutually given —in short, Ida prevailed.

The little counsel of war was brought to a conclusion, and the determination adopted that both should attempt the ascent of the precipice together—that, being arrived at the top, Conrad should pursue his way across the forest to Nanders, which, if they had luck in their attempt, he might still reach before daylight, while Ida could easily reach the bridge of Martinsbrück, which she might cross without exciting any suspicion, and so be at home to relieve the anxiety of her parents by breakfast time. Such was the plan of their campaign, and no more time was lost ere they began to put it in execution. The swollen condition of the torrent whose channel was to serve them for a path, considerably increased the difficulties of the enterprise, but the real dangers of such an achievement are not exactly what they appear to those unaccustomed to such scenes. The deficiencies of brain and mind are more to be feared than those of limb and muscle. The human foot and arm will bear the human form in safety, if their efforts be not paralysed by weakness of nerve. The sleep-walker will traverse a narrow beam suspended over an abyss in safety.

They commenced their task with good heart, Conrad leading the way, and turning at each instant, now to indicate the exact spot where he had found it possible to place a foot, now to give a sustaining hand, and again to bend down some tall twig of the brushwood which skirted that part of the torrent, till it was within the grasp of Ida's hand, and might serve as a means of pulling herself up the more precipitous points of the ascent. In this manner they had already attained a considerable height, and had left the foaming river far enough below to have

turned giddy the brain of a lowlander by merely thinking of the depth beneath him, when a sudden cry from the other side of the torrent they were ascending caused them both to start. The swiftly-careering clouds parted, from time to time permitting as it were a flash of starlight to pierce through the darkness, and such a chance as this permitted them to descry the dim forms of three men on the other side of the gully, and a little higher up the precipice. They were descending it cautiously and warily, and either by the ear or the eye, had become aware of the vicinity of our friends a few minutes before they had themselves been perceived. Conrad felt not a moment's uncertainty as to the business of the strangers. Who but a smuggler, or a smuggler's *lawful foe* could be in such a spot at such a time? He had no doubt but that the three men were the same whom old Bradela had seen in the middle of the pass. But what had induced them to desert their post there, or have led them to guess his change of course and plans, was a mystery far beyond his power of guessing.

He was not, however, long left to mere conjecture on these points, for the strangers had now descended to a level with him, and were close enough to be easily seen and heard, notwithstanding the darkness of the night and the brawling of the torrent. The three men were now standing on a mass of rock which had at some former period fallen from the cliff above, and which afforded them a flat platform on which they stood commodiously enough. The narrow gully, down which the torrent leaped, was between them and the smuggler; it was impassable at that particular spot, but might be crossed easily enough a few yards higher. Ida was a little way behind Conrad, and consequently somewhat lower down the precipice, so that the overhanging rock on which the revenue officers stood effectually concealed her from their sight.

The parties were thus situated when the foremost of the three men hailed Conrad, and bade him surrender himself as their prisoner, adding, that the next time he crossed running water while they were on the look out for him, he had better not let his boat float down the stream to carry the tidings.

This was in fact the case. The officers were of course as well aware of the existence of a pass up the side of the Nicolaus-Mauer, possible, though desperately difficult, as the smuggler was; and when one of their number observed an empty boat, floating down the stream at the opening of the gorge, that circumstance connected with the non-appearance of the person they were waiting for, led them easily enough to surmise the real state of the case.

Poor Ida! It is not very difficult to guess what her feelings must have been when she heard the challenge of the officer, and the taunt which followed it. It was, then, her carelessness which had put the officers on their track! Had it not been for her, all would have gone well! Poor Ida!

It was indeed an awful moment. The officers had firearms, and he who had hailed Reinhardt had, as he did so, levelled his piece at him. Conrad was also armed, but in an exchange of shots, it would have been three to one against him. A moment's consideration sufficed to decide the young smuggler as to the course he should pursue. If there must be a death-struggle between them, he thought his chance would be better were he placed beside his enemies on the platform. His chance would be better in a hand to hand encounter. There was the precipice—as deadly a weapon as the pistol. He therefore, having made a sign to Ida that she was to keep back where she was, out of sight, replied to the challenger that he surrendered, and would come across to them; and having said so, he proceeded for a few yards to ascend the torrent, till he reached the spot where it was practicable to cross it, while the officer, turning as he moved, continued to cover him with his pistol.

The eyes of the three custom-house men were, as may easily be imagined, all on him, as he proceeded to cross to their side of the torrent. It was an interval of breathless suspense! Five minutes might perhaps suffice Conrad for climbing to the fordable spot, and for descending again, till he should reach the platform. In less time it was scarcely possible to do it; for though the distance was but trifling, it was difficult ground, and could not be tra-

versed without considerable caution. These five minutes were not wasted by Ida. Her plan of operations had been as quickly decided upon as that of Conrad. It was the custom of the young smuggler to carry with him on all his mountain expeditions a stout staff, shod with an iron spike. On the present occasion he had lent this to Ida, to assist her ascent, and it was in her hand when they were surprised by the officers. By the aid of this staff she quickly scrambled down to the brink of the torrent, and contrived to catch hold of a long pendent bough of a tree which grew on the opposite side, immediately below the mass of rock on which the officers stood. Taking firm hold of this, she sprang towards the other bank, and though she fell short of it, and was plunged into the water, she finally succeeded in dragging herself out exactly at the base of the fragment of rock so often mentioned. This fragment of rock, as she had plainly perceived from the other side of the gully, rested for support almost entirely on a smaller mass below, which was itself supported in the position it had taken by a quantity of loose stones and earth, which the swollen torrent had already in part washed away.

Very little assistance was wanted, and such as might easily be given by an active and willing hand, in order to dislodge the smaller rock. Great, however, was the risk which any one who made such an attempt must run of being overwhelmed by the fall of the huge mass above. And very fearful, also, was the thought of thus plunging three human beings—douaniers although they were—and Austrians to boot—in such certain and terrible destruction. But ten thousand times more terrible still was the sickening possibility that the awful catastrophe might be brought about a moment too late, and thereby involve in its destruction the beloved being whom it was intended to save! But the mind of the young Ida was strung to the deed. A few desperately violent strokes of the iron-spiked staff, not given at random, but at the very weakest point to be espied at the water-worn base of the smaller rock, were likely to do much; the instant aid of the assisting torrent, too, did more than half the work. The stone quivered as if an earthquake were busy with it, and then

it suddenly gave way and rolled into the abyss. Did its movement, and the crash which followed it, make any sound? Who was there that could tell? It was no noise produced by its headlong plunge into the torrent which to Ida's ears seemed to make the wind's howling and the torrent's roar sink into silence; for there was another and a mightier crash, and there was a wild cry with it, that would have made itself distinctly heard to any human ear, though the mountain itself had fallen. Leaping from point to point of the jutting cliffs, and thundering as it fell, the fatal platform plunged into the river below, and left Ida trembling, shaking in every limb, and almost senseless, though unharmed, unhurt, though almost, as it seemed, in the very course over which the tremendous mass had fallen.

And where was Conrad? One moment more, and Ida's worst terror would have been realized! Had her enterprise been achieved one instant later, she would have been his destroyer instead of his preserver; for he had been in the very act of springing upon the platform from above, at the moment that the mass fell, and, with his enemies clinging to it, had sunk before his eyes into the abyss! He saw them fall, he heard their despairing cry as they sunk. The place where they had stood was there no longer, and below it he saw his Ida clinging to the boughs which had befriended her, and scarcely able to stand.

Another moment brought him to her side, and the true explanation of the catastrophe instantly flashed upon him; but as he clasped her to his bosom, neither of them had power to speak. But their mutual feelings may be guessed at. Ida was dreadfully shaken, more so than her hardy project and stedfast execution of it might have led any one to expect, save those who may have observed how constantly, in women at least, every strong effort of high-wrought resolution is followed by a proportionably violent prostration of both mental and bodily strength.

After a short pause and brief consultation, Ida and her lover resumed their arduous ascent, and succeeded in reaching the summit of the Nicolaus-Mauer in safety.

A very few words will suffice to tell the remainder of

the tale. Conrad duly delivered his wares at Nanders, but it was his last trip in the smuggling line. Though Ida had been, somehow or other, beguiled into believing that it was possible a smuggler might do for a lover, nothing could persuade her, after the adventure of that dreadful night, to accept of a smuggling husband. It was impossible. But then she added, that if Conrad could be contented to settle down as a quiet, industrious farmer, she, on her side, could be well contented to be such a farmer's wife; and there was the little farm, which was one day to be all her own; and meanwhile, her parents would be glad that it should be the home of their daughter's husband, the more so that the dear old man would well like to have a stout and active son to help him in the management of it.

But besides a heavy sort of recollection of the tremendous ransom paid for the life of her dear Conrad, which would occasionally cause Ida in after-life to sigh in the midst of great happiness, she carried with her to the grave another mark of that night's sufferings. One long rich lock of her beautiful brown hair had become, before she rose on the following morning, as white as the bosom on which it fell.

* * * * * *

"And do you really mean to tell me," said I, to little Bertha Weber, who had told the whole story, the horrible death of the revenue officers included, with as much gusto as if she had been relating the shooting of three red deer; "do you really mean to tell me that this is a true story, and that these things happened in your lifetime?"

"No, not in *my* lifetime, *gnädige frau*," returned Bertha, "but in that of my father and mother, and every single word is true, and all remembered by all the old people in the village. But you may have proof if you like it, for at this very moment there are two of Ida's grand-children walking down the road yonder, and sweet pretty creatures they are."

It was impossible to resist the cogency of so conclusive a proof, and I therefore beg that this account of Conrad

Reinhardt's adventures may be received as a true and faithful history.

Whether it be so received or not, however, it is, beyond contradiction, characteristic of the locality, and may serve the reader as a memorial of a spot treasured in the remembrance of many travellers.

It may also, perhaps, induce some of those whose wanderings shall hereafter take them to the pass of Finstermünz, not to rest contented with what the high-road can show them of its beauties, but to take the trouble of exploring the far finer and more picturesque gorge which the river traverses between Finstermünz and Martinsbrück.

A MIDNIGHT PASSAGE

OF

The Mont du Chat.

NOTHING, I suppose, but "a roving disposition" could have tempted me, while the meek and gentle-looking sun of England was still looking down with his very best summer smile upon Ilfracombe — that loveliest of all English watering-places — nothing else could have tempted me to turn away, and scamper over sea and land, for the sake of taking a ramble among the lakes and mountains of Savoy. This roving disposition, however, becomes now and then a pilot that leads one into very pleasant waters; and though I am now going to narrate an adventure, which certainly might have ended in mischief, I am in no humour, even while relating it, to quarrel with any of the circumstances to which it was owing.

Moreover, it is but justice to the wisdom which originated the scheme, to declare that nothing could be better imagined and better timed for the purpose of indulging my companion and myself in a series of contrasts, exceedingly well calculated to amuse the fancy. Our excursion was, in truth, a succession of shifting scenes, all admirably well calculated to set each other off to advantage.

I have often, in looking about me, while wandering here and there over the pleasantly varied surface of our beautiful earth, amused myself by fancying that there were marked characteristics belonging to the different portions of it, curiously made up of the physical peculiarities of each region, and of the moral peculiarities of its inhabitants. In the "vine-covered hills and gay valleys of France," may one not see a harmony of tone

between the land and its indwellers, that proves, almost at a glance, that they were made for each other, and would mutually experience a very melancholy change if they were separated? How could any human being, less good-humoured and easily pleased than a Frenchman, go on from generation to generation, travelling from Paris to Lyons, or to Calais, or to Lisle, or to Strasburg, or to Orleans, or, in short, in any direction you will, and still continue to testify and declare that not any nation of the earth, nor all the nations of the earth put together, can show so picturesque a territory? And what can be so charmingly characteristic as the reasons they bring forward to justify and explain their admiration?

They can see in every closely-trimmed and wearisomely monotonous vineyard, a varied and a brilliant loveliness, that seems to partake of all the wit hereafter to be inspired by the crop it bears. And what can accord better than the rapt, poetic, imaginative temperament of the whole Teutonic race, with the bold, majestic, varied surface of all the lands that speak their tongue? From the towering glacier to the soft valley that nestles at its feet, from the sweeping Danube and abounding Rhine, to the sparkling Moselle and the dancing Inn; from each and all, and from ten thousand thousand other sources equally prolific, may we not trace that boundless variety of thought and of illustration which place our nobly imaginative German cousins on the high intellectual ground they occupy? And does not the heaven of Italy foster still, though silently, all the glowing energy of thought and action which marked it when in health?—and which may mark it yet again ere our globe withers away for ever. And America? Does not the endless continuity of her rivers suggest the "go-ahead" system beyond the power of mistake?

And England, with her temperate clime, and temperately high mountains, and temperately broad rivers, does not her *physique* in all things correspond admirably with her *morale?* Does she not, in all her operations, show herself good at need, and convertible to all utilities? Beautiful *assai*, and immoderate only in wealth and greatness? Yes, yes, all this is too true to be either battled

for or controverted, and greatly do such varieties beguile the long journey of life.

And so, after luxurating for some weeks among the lovely rocks and coves of Ilfracombe, amidst scenery often solemn without being sombre, and noble without being gigantic, the above-mentioned roving disposition sent us off again.

The first thing in the way of comical contrast that occurred to amuse us—to amuse me, I should say, for in this my companion did not share—was furnished by the ladies' style of bathing at Paris. At Ilfracombe there is a deeply-sheltered cove of exquisite beauty, looking so sacredly apart, that it is impossible to enter it without feeling that Diana and her dainty train might there indulge in playing with the cool clear waves for ever, without fearing any audacious hunter's eye, or fisher's either. But how did I find them managing these matters in France?

The lady's bathing-cove at Ilfracombe was such a favourite spot, with me, that often, very often, I was wont, though no sea-bather myself, to repair to it, early and late, with some favourite volume in my hand, which rarely, however, succeeded for ten minutes together in withdrawing my eyes from the deep-green sea (with all its battery of rocks) surrounding the delicious basin, for ever ready for the bather's use, and which green sea seemed to be for ever dashing froth and foam into the air, as if Neptune, with a patent artillery of his own, was keeping watch and ward over his fair invaders. And here, in all the mystery of deepest solitude, the daughters of England having once, twice, thrice, perhaps, kissed their native guardian, retreated, with shy step and dripping drapery, each one to her solitary dressing-room, where scarcely a sister's eye was permitted to follow.

It was but a very few days after quitting this most characteristic English bathing-ground, that I found myself, by the invitation of a Parisian friend, in the midst of the lady's swimming-school on the Seine. Never shall I forget the feeling of astonishment which my first glance round its ample enclosure occasioned me!

My friend led me to a bridge that crossed the middle of the enclosure, and from this vantage-ground I looked

round, and saw about a hundred figures clothed in little blue *camisoles*, which reached from the throat to the waist, with pantaloons to match. Some were in the water and some out of it; the latter running along the banks of this huge lady-pond, playing a thousand gambols, and from time to time springing with an Undine plunge into the midst of their floating companions—all laughing, all talking, all frolicking,—with the exception of here and there a novice, who was learning the art of swimming in sober earnest, and from whom there occasionally arose a sort of drowning "Oh! oh! oh!" as her newly-applied strength failed her, and she found it necessary to call upon the swimming-master for aid.

This swimming-master, a quiet, respectable-looking man of thirty-five or forty, appeared to devote himself to one pupil at a time, which, if the pupil happened to be a new one, was quite necessary, as these fair floaters were disporting in water of about twenty feet deep. He carried a long pole in his hand, with a handle conveniently formed to receive the grasping fingers of the failing water-nymphs.

At the first glance the scene was too grotesque not to produce a laugh; but a second showed a multitude of either pretty, or amusing, or interesting varieties, which soon riveted the attention, and rendered the whole spectacle something that it was exceedingly difficult to cease gazing upon. At one point a group of very young girls, some of them quite children indeed, with an anxious mother or two in the midst, were gazing at each other's queer costume with unbounded merriment, as they stood dallying on the brink, preparatory to taking the plunge.

Some among these pretty little naïads swam like otters; and these, conscious of their power and consequent safety, defied their more timid companions to all sorts of watery gambols. At the head of the enclosure, where the water is deepest, a light flight of steps leads to an elevation of about twenty feet perhaps, and those who feared not to dive, seemed to like nothing so well as the scampering up these steps, and with their slender figures rendered slenderer still by placing their arms as closely as possible in straight lines beside them, letting themselves drop into the water by taking one bold step forward. There was

something so exceedingly startling to unaccustomed eyes in thus seeing play and danger mixed together by young girls, with so much reckless daring, that it required some little time to get rid of a feeling of alarm; but when convinced that they were all as safe as if they had been lying on down pillows instead of transparent waves, I began to enjoy the scene exceedingly.

Nothing, perhaps, excites the animal spirits more than a copious ablution in cold water; and this may account for the boundless gaiety with which the majority of these dark-blue mermaids pursued their sport—rolling, tumbling, bounding onwards, darting backwards—now on their breasts, now on their backs, now turning round and round with an agility which, under the circumstances, seemed to me almost miraculous, and now floating so quietly, and with so very little visible exertion, that they seemed intending to take a nap upon their liquid pillows.

As usual in all cases where activity of movement makes the principal point of display, the prettiest part of the performers were the youngest; but, nevertheless, there was one lady who, though decidedly past the age when the *beauté du diable* is so apparent as to eclipse, in some degree, every other charm, was still extremely lovely; and she had, moreover, condescended to bestow a few picturesque touches on her head-gear, having twisted the coloured kerchief which protected her locks from all superfluous moisture, into something of Eastern outline, and very literally turning to "favour and to prettiness," what, in most other instances, had an effect rather unpleasantly the reverse.

This lady was a most accomplished swimmer; but, unlike her juvenile rivals, she displayed not her skill either by springing from on high into the flood, or by diving with dauntless courage till long lost to sight. Neither did she dart with the velocity of an arrow from one end of the long enclosure to the other. Her feats were not feats of strength, but of grace: and I was soon so completely fascinated by her various beautiful manœuvrings, that I could look at nothing else. She soon perceived that I was watching her, and good-humouredly passed again, and again, under the bridge on which I stood,

turning up her large lustrous eyes, and smiling till every bright pearl in the double row that nature had given her, seemed to laugh at me out of the water as she passed.

I very soon became certain that she was in some way or other a student of attitudes, for nothing could be more skilful than the manner in which she contrived to vary the monotony which her exercise seemed to require. But though she certainly was taking exercise, and pretty strong exercise too, I presume, her movements gave much more the idea of lazy, voluptuous indolence, than of violent exertion. She seemed to pillow her head on the water in a way that no one else did, and turned now on this side and now on that, and now completely over, with a noiseless slowness of movement, which was rather calculated to suggest the idea of her doing so to avoid the annoyance of some rudely-twisted rose-leaf that had crossed her path, than that she was straining her muscles to avoid the disagreeable alternative of being drowned.

Before I left the swimming-school, I learned that this beautiful swimmer was an actress at one of the minor theatres. But I believe I have swum away after all these water-witches to an immeasurable distance from Savoy and the Mont du Chat. Wanderers will be wanderers still, whether flourishing their pilgrim's staff or their gray goose-quill!

Well! the next thing that struck me in the way of contrast was the bright sky, the flat fields, and the gay-coloured peasantry of the Bourbonais, who, in all the pomp and pageantry of a fair-day, were strutting about with their indescribable straw-hats stuck on the top of their heads, grapes in their hands, and bouquets in their hair.

Every feature of our beauteous Ilfracombe was so stamped upon my memory, that I had but to close my eyes in order to have the distant picture as distinctly before me as the present one. It was like turning to a bold, cold, severe, and spirit-raising landscape by Salvator, from a warm, snug, glowing, living *copy from Nature*, by Rubens.

Contrast the third was furnished by a travelling companion in the *coup*. This was a middle-aged French gentleman, sensible, well-informed, obliging and agreeable.

At the fair we all purchased peaches, and vile things

they were, but ripe, and abounding with juice. When our French companion had completed his repast, he deliberately let down a very neat new silk blind (we were travelling by the diligence, the carriage was quite new and very nice), and diligently, for several minutes together, wiped and dried his fingers upon it.

How deep into the moral peculiarities of the two nations may we fairly go to account for the difference of proceeding in such a matter as this? . . . And so we got to Beauvoisin; and there we determined, having twice seen the Pass des Echelles, that we would not see it again this time, but look at the Mont du Chat instead.

That we might set out upon this expedition without losing time on the following morning, we got our baggage examined by the Sardinian authorities overnight, and weary work it was, for unfortunately we had a good many books, all, however, of the most innocent and innoxious kind; but this did not avail us, for they were all seized, as well as a packet or two of writing-paper, of a quality only to be found in Paris, and which was probably taken, not because there was any mischief in it just then, but lest there might be by and by. The whole of the offending articles were put under official seals, and what became of them afterwards we have yet to learn.*

We bore our misfortune as well as we could, and quite forgot it the next morning, when at six o'clock on one of the clearest and sweetest of September mornings, we found ourselves trotting along sideways, in the queerest but most commodious of carriages, well stuffed, upon easy springs, and so near the ground that one might be in and out of it a dozen times in as many minutes, without the driver being consulted on the subject. This facility in the transferring one's person to the spot from whence one most wished to look out, was especially agreeable in a country so surpassingly lovely as that through which we were passing; and I shall ever account my little Savoy "volantin," as this machine is called, with its one horse, its four wheels, and its easily-unhooked little wicket in front of the sidelong seat, as one of the very pleasantest conveyances I ever got into.

* These were all forwarded to us at Florence afterwards.

We followed the course of the Guiers Vif—so called in contradistinction to the Guiers Mort, which runs near the Grande Chartreuse—to the village of St. Genix, where we breakfasted in a queer little *café*, not in a style sufficiently luxurious to tempt us to the loss of much time. The narrow little valley, often just wide enough, with scarcely an inch to spare, for the river and the "volantin" to run side by side, is very pretty; but it is after passing St. Genix that the beauty of the excursion commences.

Near the village, the Guiers Vif falls into the Rhone, and from that point, the road, following the upward course of the latter river, presents a ceaseless succession of beautiful landscapes. Near the point of junction, a bold suspension-bridge, over the Rhone, with a picturesque castle on a towering height above, both named "le Cordon," produced one of those startling landscapes which no eye can contemplate with indifference. The mountain of the Grande Chartreuse is one of the most remarkable points in its majestic back-ground. From this point to the beautifully situated little town of Yenne, the valley of the Rhone offers a series of pictures that it would be difficult to rival anywhere. On the right, in ascending the river, this valley is bounded by noble limestone cliffs, rising almost perpendicularly from the road. At intervals, however, there are soft and gracious slopes of the richest verdure, varied by a growth of underwood that sometimes assumes the aspect of a forest.

The road often skirts the blue and rapid stream with nothing but a parapet to divide them, but retreats at intervals to leave space for the vast masses of rock which have fallen from the cliffs above. On the other side of the river, the hills rise more gently, and are for the most part cultivated. As the road approaches Yenne, the scenery increases in interest. A French fort, of very imposing appearance, called St. Pierre Châtel, defends the narrow pass, and at its foot the river makes a sharp turn eastward, and is soon found to be issuing forth from a narrow gorge between the mountains. Immediately beneath the fort a suspension-bridge connects Savoy and France, and passing by the foot of this, the road and the

river enter the defile together, and have it all to themselves. Had the light of day shone a little less brilliantly above us, or had the days of the mountain banditti been less completely gone and over, this would have been a very pretty spot to get up an adventure in: but now, with all its pretty frowns and picturesque gloominess, it looks like a spot well calculated to frighten fairies, if they chanced to come upon it unexpectedly in a moonlight ramble.

At Yenne we dined, not too luxuriously, and then traversed a few miles of peculiarly rich country, preparatory to beginning the ascent of the Mont du Chat. But all this lovely scenery had not been passed through *au grand galop*, nor even *au petit trot*, for we had walked very deliberately through great part of it, enjoying heartily a mode of conveyance which enabled us to linger on our road as much as we liked.

It was, I believe, about six o'clock when we quitted Yenne, and as the moon was nearly at the full, we had no doubt of being able to reach Chambéry without having any cause to repent of the delay in which we had indulged. So off we set again in excellent spirits, and with that delightful species of excitement which is always felt, I believe, at the approach of a celebrated mountain pass, by those to whom the climbing it is as completely a labour of love as it is to me and my companion. It chanced that it was not till our dinner at Yenne was concluded that we remembered the celebrity of one particular species of wine which is the growth of a vineyard in the neighbourhood. We were by no means inclined to delay further our already late departure for the purpose of renewing our dessert with the accompaniment of this *vin d'Altesse*, as it is called, but neither were we willing to omit the opportunity of tasting the only produce of the grape which is thought to resemble champagne, and which has, moreover, the additional interest of owing its existence to the patriotism of a native prince, who brought the first plants that produced it from Cyprus.

We accordingly purchased a flask, and stowed it in a corner of the carriage, being cautioned, however, by the seller, not to leave it there too long, as it was sufficiently *mousseux* in its nature to burst its bonds and descend

upon us in a sparkling shower, if we did so. Accordingly our travelling corkscrew and drinking cups were brought forth as soon as we began the ascent of the mountain. We found the wine very good, very much *up*, and, as it seemed to me, very strong; and moreover, we agreed that it would have been greatly improved by being *frappé*. However, we each took our cupfull, and then perceiving that the view was already becoming more splendid, and the path beside the road in every way inviting, we determined to walk; but, fearing that our vehemently *mousseux* wine might play us a trick in our absence, and cause the dusty little carriage to undergo a more thorough washing than we should just then approve, we made over the flask to the driver, explaining the reason for our generosity, and telling him to do whatever he liked with it, save replacing it inside the carriage. And then we began to mount, slowly and luxuriously, in the sweet, freshening breeze of evening, with a landscape at our feet that seemed to spread itself wider and wider as we mounted. But slowly as we walked, the horse, as it seemed, walked more slowly still, for we soon left it behind us, and continued to mount the admirably well-managed ascent, without giving ourselves a moment's concern for having lost sight of it. The only living thing we met was a woodcutter, and this was just at the spot where the brush-wood which so richly clothes the lower part of the mountain begins to vanish by degrees, giving place to the sharply-pointed, savage-looking rocks which form the great beacon-point of the neighbourhood. He was driving, very literally driving before him, a small cart filled with wood, which was mounted on four low wheels, and which by the aid of an occasional touch from him, was steadily pursuing its way towards Yenne without the assistance of any horse, ass, ox, or mule whatever.

After passing this very independently locomotive machine, the ascent became steeper, and we began to look back the way we had come in the hope of descrying the carriage, for I had just then a notion that being carried for the next mile or so might be still more delightful than walking. But we looked in vain. Still, however, we were not in the least degree alarmed or annoyed; instead of

resting by means of the carriage, we reposed ourselves by standing still and gazing on the gorgeous landscape.

The air was so deliciously bright and clear that we never troubled ourselves to decide how much of the silvery light around us proceeded from the sun, and how much from the moon; had we done this, we should have discovered that night was very rapidly taking the place of day, and that it would be quite as well to be looking after our baggage, as luxuriating in the splendour of the glorious but fading light which was spread over the enormous landscape below. The magnificent terrace of this noble road were more delightful to me than almost any I had ever traversed, for they were protected by a parapet, so that, as Rousseau says, "Cela faisait que je pouvais regarder le fond, et gagner des vestiges tout à mon aise."

And long did we enjoy the occupation afforded by hanging over this precious parapet, and tracing the principal objects of the country through which we had been travelling; I, with true feminine courage, selected the spots where the precipice was the most awfully perpendicular, for the purpose of enjoying the stirring sense of danger, in union with the comfortable feeling of security—much as I have seen a little dog barking at a great one athwart the bars of a lofty gate. The whole scene was one of great beauty. On one side, an almost boundless landscape, through which the Rhone might still be traced, catching the fading light at intervals, and causing here a ruined tower, and there a massive fort, to look mysteriously dark by the contrast. On the other, the road was sometimes skirted by patches of stunted but very picturesque underwood, and sometimes by huge masses of rock, that pierced through the soil, and showed us plainly enough what sort of region we had reached.

To render the effect perfect, the clear voice of a young peasant-girl, driving a score or so of goats before her, broke upon the stillness of this most lovely evening with a sweet, pipe-like purity of tone that was delightful. As she and her goats slowly opened upon us from behind a projecting crag, I caught distinctly a few words she was singing which were remarkable as being neither French nor Italian, but something that seemed to hover between both.

To my great delight I afterwards got hold of an old ballad-sort of thing, at Chambéry, from which I am convinced her morsel was taken. The lines run thus:—

"Di bassà Tarantaisa
Du pay d'ien de s'ai
Son trè zenti zomò
Que son amoireu de mèi;
L'on é le fi d'on conto,
L'utro é le fi d'on prince,
Un utro é le fi d'on ré—
O ché d'amor per mè!"

The watching this girl and her goats, and the listening to her song, helped very effectively to beguile us of a little more of our precious time; but when she had quite passed out of sight and hearing—which, however was not very speedily, for we watched her vanish and appear again upon one terrace after another as she descended to the plain—but when at length we had quite lost sight of her, we began for the first time to feel seriously alarmed about our carriage and dinner.

It is so very common an occurrence with us, when travelling "*vetturino*," to outwalk our equipage in mounting a hill, that we were prepared for considerable delay on so great a length of up-hill road as we were now traversing; but allowing, with all possible liberality, for the greatest imaginable slowness, it was beginning to be very disagreeably evident that some accident must have happened, for if the horse had moved at all he must, we thought, have moved within sight of us by that time. What was to be done? I had enjoyed walking up the mountain exceedingly, but I was much too tired to feel the inclination for retracing my steps, especially as I began to think it very doubtful if we should find our little carriage in a condition to help us up again. Our situation, now that we were at length awakened to a consciousness of it, was really very embarrassing. Whatever was the cause of the man's delay, it was very important that he should be looked after, for not only was the whole of our travel-wardrobe in his hands, but a considerable sum in travelling money also.

"Will you venture to remain here alone, while I use my best speed to run down the hill to look for him?" demanded my companion.

There was a good deal of sheer cowardice, I dare say, in the difficulty which I felt in giving an answer. Doubtless the mountain's side was as safe then as it had been an hour before, when I should very readily have answered the same question in the affirmative; but no one can fairly judge of what it seemed to involve at that moment who has not looked about him a little, exactly at the same spot, and at a similar hour. Anything more wild and desolate than this highest part of the pass can hardly be imagined. It is true that the moon shone with unclouded brightness; but although this lovely light was quite sufficient to prevent my complaining of the darkness, it rather tended, I think, to increase my idle fears, than to lessen them; for the heavy masses of shade thrown by the capriciously-shaped rocks beneath which I stood, were really appalling, and there seemed to be more certainty of total darkness where the moonlight did not come, than of seeing clearly the objects that reflected it where it did. I bitterly regretted that we had not arrived at a sober comprehension of our position before the goat-herdess had passed out of sight; for I doubt not but a few sous would have made her my willing companion for a little while, and I could have been perfectly satisfied in listening to her chantings concerning the "*tre zenti zomó*," for a longer time than would have sufficed my companion to reach the foot of the mountain. But this bright thought came all too late, and I endeavoured to look braver than I felt as I replied that I was not at all afraid of being left, and that I would either remain where I was or stroll slowly back the way we had come, if he would immediately set off with all speed.

I had hardly uttered the words before I was alone. And then I began to tell myself how very beautiful the scene before me was, and how very bright the moon that shone upon it, and inwardly made a great many more very sensible observations, all tending to prove that I was exceedingly fortunate in being on so beautiful a spot, and that I might depend upon it that I had the mighty Mont du Chat wholly and solely to myself. This sort of vapouring did very well for a little while, but by degrees I got exceedingly uncomfortable; the absence of my

companion seemed interminable; the shadows appeared to be growing bigger, and the light less. And then—I became perfectly convinced that I heard the howl of a wolf at no great distance. This settled the matter at once. Had I been certain that walking down the mountain I had walked up would have brought me to climb its lofty side again three times over, I could not have remained where I was; and it was with a feeling of infinite relief that, having thus resolved, I set off on my return down the hill. Walking down an ably-engineered road on the side of a mountain is a very different thing from walking up it; and though I intended to go very slowly, I rather think I did the contrary, for with all my impatience, it appeared to me but a short time before the broad moonlight showed me, on the terrace below that on which I was walking, a group of objects of which the carriage evidently was one. A few minutes more brought me beside I——, who was bending over the body of a man lying by the road-side, to all appearance dead.

That our unfortunate driver had met his fate from some at present inexplicable accident, appeared certain, for the horse had drawn himself and the carriage to a spot by the road-side where he could contrive to regale himself both by the leaves and grass of a little copse which skirted it, and was standing as quietly as a donkey might have done under similar circumstances. I uttered an exclamation of horror on perceiving the extended body of the unfortunate man.

"What can we do with him, my dear I——?" said I, with a convulsive sigh; "what is to be done with the body?" and I remembered with a shudder the howl of the wolves I was so certain of having heard above.

"Do with him?" reiterated my companion; "we must wake him, if it be possible."

Now, the beams of the moon fell upon the up-turned face of the man, and I thought he looked so ghastly pale that I could hardly help replying—

"Awake the dead!"

I perceived, however, that the quotation would be ill-timed, and therefore only said—"Is he asleep, then?"

"Dead asleep, and dead drunk too, I'm afraid," was the reply; "and what in the world we are to do with him, I know not. There lies the empty flask, you see."

The mystery was now explained; but the better we understood it, the more embarrassing did our condition appear, and heartily did I wish that the patriotic Duke of Savoy had suffered the vines of Cyprus to remain undisturbed on the soil where nature planted them, instead of bringing them to corrupt the manners of his simple Montagnards. Nor was it much consolation to remember that the fault was rather ours than his. There we were, with all our belongings, pretty nearly at the top of an enormous mountain, with no available means of conveying either ourselves or them to any inhabited spot of earth; for to march off the carriage and horse, leaving the owner by the road-side, would be scarcely honourable, while every attempt to arouse the said owner to a sense of his condition, and the performance of his duty, became every moment more utterly hopeless. The man snored louder than my wolves had howled; and there really seemed no alternative save passing the night in watching his slumbers, abandoning our property altogether, while we trudged in search of a shelter for ourselves, or setting off, as before hinted, with the carriage and horse.

Now, though our dilemma had thus three horns instead of two, our condition was little the better for it, so difficult was it to decide which was the least objectionable of the three. At length, I had the honour of suggesting the bright idea of depositing the coachman in the vehicle, and patiently walking beside it till we reached a roof under which we might take shelter for the night. It was immediately decided that we should act upon this; but there was something so indescribably absurd in the process we had to go through before we could put it in action, that, despite of our real and genuine distress, we laughed for a few moments very heartily.

But our sedateness soon returned, for, alas! there was a great deal of very heavy work to get through before we could be again *en route*. Fortunately our little Savoyard *ivrogne* was no giant, so the business of rolling him over and over, till he was got to the best spot for hoisting him

into the carriage, was less laborious than it might have been; but as this was an operation in which, notwithstanding all my desire to be useful, I could not assist, it was not got through without difficulty. At length, however, he was fairly in the carriage, the door was shut, and off we set. I really am at a loss to imagine anything much more ludicrous than our situation. The moon was now in its very brightest glory over our heads, and we passed round the stern, majestic-looking rock that seems to guard the summit of the pass, at an hour that would have made every step of the marvellously fine descent upon lake Bourget positively sublime, had there not been something in the style and manner of our *cortège* which turned it into a joke. Hardly had we proceeded a hundred yards, however, ere the manner of our march was changed. The soporific qualities of the *Altesse* wine had enabled its victim to withstand bawling, shaking, pulling, and rolling, but no sooner did the well-known jingle of his horse's bell and the rattle of his carriage wheels reach his ears, than the mysterious veil which envelops the faculties in sleep—whether tipsy or sober—was withdrawn, and ere we had any notice whatever of what was going to happen, the man was at our side.

His first stammerings and stutterings were utterly unintelligible; but by degrees it became evident, that though a good deal puzzled and confounded, his sound nap had sufficed to restore his senses sufficiently for him to comprehend that it was his business to drive, and ours to be driven. I did not, however, immediately relish the idea of trusting ourselves to his coachmanship, for the road, though admirably constructed, is occasionally steep, and the tourniquets are sometimes sharp enough to make it at least seem probable that a carriage may overturn, if twisted round them incautiously. But I was by this time exceedingly tired of walking, and perceiving that the poor fellow really looked as sober as a judge, I got in, though my companion, for my greater security, retained his station at the horse's head.

The first perfectly satisfactory proof which the driver gave me that he was indeed himself again, was his descending from the box and placing himself at the door of

the carriage, in order to point out to my notice the exquisite beauty of the moonlight view. This descent of the Mont du Chat is greatly celebrated for its beauty; but I doubt if those who have only seen it by daylight have any idea how surpassingly lovely it *can* be. Never can I forget the silver lustre of the lake over which the road seemed to hang, or the unspeakable clearness of the black shadows which here and there a towering promontory cast upon it, and the deep stillness, and the soft, sweet air, after a day of intense heat. In short, our adventure was no longer considered as a misfortune; and it was more than once or twice either, notwithstanding all the up-hill and down-hill walking I had had that day, that I again left the little carriage in order to enjoy to perfection the enchantment of the scene.

But when at length the level of the Lac de Bourget is reached, the beauty ceases; for the lake itself becomes invisible, and the mere outline of the mountain tops beyond, although seen through a flood of silver light, could not make me forget that I had just climbed a mountain higher still. The town of Aix les Bains, which from the mountain side seemed almost close to us, though on the other side of the lake, was now totally out of sight, and the long line of tall poplars beside which we trotted wearily along toward Chambéry, seemed endless. Welcome were the lights which were still visible, *ça et là*, in this remote little metropolis, and more than half asleep was I when, at length, we stopped at *Le Post*, which is the principal hotel in the city. It was a sore trial of our philosophy to be told at such a moment that there was not a chamber vacant! But it had to be borne; and we did bear it with a very considerable degree of magnanimity, considering the number of hours which had elapsed since we had left our last bed, and all that had been done in the interval. But we were speedily rewarded; for at the *Hôtel de l'Europe* we found exactly everything we wanted, and I was soon as sound asleep as if I too had emptied a flask of *vin d'Altesse*.

Rousseau's Favourite Residence,

LES CHARMETTES.

"Le nom d'un écrivain qui exalta si vivement les âmes est réclamé par l'histoire. En s'occupant de Rousseau, elle perd son impossibilité; et tour à tour elle l'admire ou le plaint, le bénit ou l'accuse."—LACRETELLE *le jeune.*

THOSE who drive post through Chambéry, *ventre à terre*, commit an injustice towards Savoy, and great unkindness towards themselves, provided, that is to say, they are furnished with an average portion of the power of deriving enjoyment from fine scenery, which is providentially bestowed upon mortals, in order to render agreeable their wanderings over the craggy globe assigned to them as the *locale* of their mortal pilgrimage. To all such, the neighbourhood of Chambéry is calculated to afford great delight; and for the happy few who have at will the power of devoting the months of summer to rambling, I think it would be difficult to find a more judicious spot for their head-quarters. Nay, such as are not mere summer ramblers, but who set off from their homes with the important object of a long journey before them, "un voyage à faire, et Naples au bout," would do well to pause among the mountains and lakes of Savoy, for they will find nothing of the same tone amidst the sunny glories of Italy. I give this counsel with the more confidence, because I have practised what I preach, and that so recently, as to have all the benefits derived from it fresh upon my memory.

Being *en route* for Italy, and having an idle week or two of certain fine weather to spare, we devoted the

brightest days of last September to wandering among the Alps of Savoy, leaving Chambéry for a day or two at a time, and returning to it again and again, as the centre from which every excursion could most conveniently be made. And for many of these there was no need to leave our comfortable hotel at Chambéry at all, for there are many which, by means of early rising, may be brought within the compass of a day; and others—by no means the least interesting—which may be achieved in an hour or two.

Among these last, a visit to Les Charmettes must of course rank first; for there are few persons, I think, who could fail to feel an interest in visiting the spot on which Jean-Jacques declares himself to have passed the happiest portion of his generally unhappy existence.

Perhaps no man ever died, leaving so much that was immortal behind him for the examination and judgment of mankind, on whom sentence has been passed so variously. In the course of my life I have listened to opinions respecting Rousseau, which have graduated from the deepest execration to admiration the most enthusiastic; and not admiration only, for that is a feeling not unfrequently elicited by beings we detest; but I have heard many, and good men too, declare that there were qualities of heart and soul in Rousseau which could not be contemplated without reverence and love, while others —and these others certainly good men also—shudder as they hear his name, and seem truly and honestly to believe that if there be a case on record in which that most beneficent command, "JUDGE NOT" may be set aside with impunity, it is his; and that the consigning him to everlasting condemnation must, of necessity, be considered as an act of piety in the consigner.

That there are a multitude of human beings, both in times present and times past, whose characters are, and have been, more easily mistaken than understood, is very certain, and is a fact too patent to require or permit of discussion. But that a voluminous writer, and one, too, who has laid himself and his actions bare, with a degree of unshrinking and unscrupulous audacity that no other individual ever approached—that such an one should so

completely have set man's judgment at fault in attempting to understand him, is strange. The solution of the enigma must be sought, and may, as I think, be found, at the same source from whence arises its intricacy.

The critic, from his chair of authority, and the general reader, from his lounging sofa, have both been accustomed to look at men, through their writings, with a sort of habitual allowance for any little egotistical flights in which they may have represented themselves too much *en beau*, but are quite unused to the process necessary for detecting egotistical exaggeration in an opposite direction. But to judge Rousseau fairly, this must be done. It is quite evident that the genius of this celebrated man, though of a nature to elevate him perpetually into the very highest regions of intellectual sublimity, was accompanied by a weakness of character, which, displayed as it is, by way of self-discipline and atonement, in the pages of his Confessions, places him often as much below the ordinary dignity of human nature, as many of his speculations lead us to place him above it. Those on whom these speculations produce a deeper effect than do his penitential anecdotes, are perhaps somewhat too apt to forget altogether the latter; and of such is composed the by no means small troop of his admirers; while, on the other hand, those whose memory retains more vividly the anecdotes than the speculations, naturally fall into the other extreme, and consider him almost as a monster.

As this latter judgment cannot be uttered but in a tone of indignant and outraged morality, — for which, Heaven knows, the unhappy philosopher gave frightful cause,—it has naturally followed that a very large proportion of such as have deemed him more weak than wicked have shrunk from saying so, lest such a judgment should be mistaken for a proof of lax morality in themselves: and thus the suffrages of those who have really made themselves acquainted with his works have perhaps never yet been fairly counted.

It has often been said, and at the first glance, indeed, very plausibly, that the character of a man may be more fairly judged by a history of his actions than by a history of his thoughts. But without examining the pos-

sible fallacy of this, in many instances, it must be evident to those who will study, with a little care, the portrait of himself which this great writer has left us, that, in his case at least, such fallacy is undeniable. All that was great and good in the heart and soul of Rousseau was indigenous, innate, born with him, and formed the real and essential material of his character; while all that was bad, degraded, and vile, arose from the miserable associations into which he was unhappily thrown at the most important moment of his existence.

When, before he had reached the age of sixteen, Jean-Jacques ran away from his native town, in order to escape the savage treatment which he knew he should receive from the hands of his brutal master (for having made a Sunday evening ramble into the country so long as to render it impossible for him and his joyous companions to return till half an hour after the gates of the town were shut)—when he thus rushed upon the world, leaving everything like safety and protection behind him, he carried with him as innocent and affectionate a heart as Nature ever gave; and had he then been so blessed by chance as to have fallen into virtuous hands, there is every reason to believe that his career would have been as happy and respectable as it was lamentably the reverse.

It would be difficult, I think, to find, in any autobiography extant, a passage of more pathos, or of more self-evident truth, than that in which the unhappy man laments the circumstances which made him what he was, and which tore him from what he might have been. After speaking of the position he should have probably held as an engraver in his native town, he goes on to say—

"Si j'étais tombé dans les mains d'un meilleur maître, j'aurais passé, dans le sein de ma religion, de ma patrie, de ma famille, et de mes amis, une vie paisible et douce, telle qu'il la faillait à mon caractère, dans l'uniformité d'un travail de mon goût, et d'une société selon mon cœur. J'aurais été bon chrétien, bon citoyen, bon père de famille, bon ami, bon ouvrier, bon homme en toute chose. J'aurais aimé mon état, je l'aurais honoré peut-

être; et après avoir passé une vie obscure et simple, mais égale et douce, je serais mort paisiblement, dans le sein des miens. Au lieu du cela—quel tableau vais-je faire?"*

It would be difficult, I think, to read this without prejudice, and not to mourn over the faults of the writer, rather than execrate them. The passage, however, is not without its moral use; it was written after the author had enjoyed all the gratification that an enormous literary fame could bring him, in Paris and in London, personally among the most distinguished individuals in both, and throughout Europe, by the scarcely less gratifying sensation produced among all orders of reading men by his works; a gratification not likely to be much lessened by the fact, that among the multitudes who read his theories, no small number thought themselves called upon to abuse him for them. Jean-Jacques, with all his fantastical attachment to his own notions, whether right or wrong, would probably have been extremely mortified had no one thought his startling speculations of sufficient importance to provoke hostility from those against whose systems they were aimed. But it is evident, from the passage above cited, written towards the close of his melancholy life, that not all the fame which had succeeded to the obscurity of his early years, had sufficed to atone to his spirit for having lost, in the tumult of his passions, the precious treasure of his own esteem. There is the essence of many an excellent sermon in this. Nor is this the only valuable lesson to be extracted from the study of Rousseau. Whatever were his faults, that of accusing others in order to exculpate himself is not among them. On the contrary, he falls so violently into the other extreme, that it requires all the

* "If I had fallen into the hands of a better master, I should have passed a peaceful and gentle life, such as my character required, in the bosom of my religion, of my country, of my family and my friends, in the routine of an employment which suited my taste, and of a society which suited my heart. I should have been a good Christian, a good citizen, a good father, a good friend, a good workman, a good man in every way. I should have loved my profession, and might perhaps have done honour to it; and, after having passed a life obscure and simple, but tranquil and serene, I should have died peacefully in the bosom of my own people. Instead of this—what is the picture I am about to trace?"

intuitive and irresistible conviction of his sincerity, which all his disclosures carry with them, to enable one to believe that he is in earnest when he calls his negligent father *un père excellent*, and that detestable source of all his deepest moral corruption, Madame de Warens, *la meilleure des femmes*. Now it must be evident, I think, to any one who reads the early part of the Confessions, that had this *père excellent* done his duty by his motherless boy, that boy would never have had such confessions to make. In the first place he tells us, that when he was seven years old, he used to keep him up reading romances, aloud and alternately, till *entendant le matin les hirondelles*, he sent him to bed, saying, "*Allons nous coucher—je suis plus enfant que toi.*" Of the nature of these romances it is not difficult to judge, as Rousseau says—"J'acquis par cette dangereuse méthode une intelligence unique à mon âge sur les passions."

They had read through the collection which his mother, who died at his birth, had left behind her, in 1719. Jean-Jacques was born in 1712, and the lasting mischief produced by these baby studies may be traced almost through every page of these strange volumes—strange, and often disgusting, despite the unequalled beauty of the style, and the still more captivating freshness of original thought, and occasional good feeling, which may be found scattered through their pages. When the unhappy boy ran from Geneva, to escape the anticipated anger of the master engraver to whom he had been bound apprentice, it seems that his father rode after him, but did not overtake him. They reached the house of Madame de Warens, however, but not till the poor boy had been sent on to Turin, for the purpose of being converted to the Roman Catholic faith. Notwithstanding his unceasing protestations that his father was one of the best men, he permits himself to say, when speaking of this tardy pursuit by this good father, and the friend who accompanied him, "Ils se contentèrent de pleurer mon sort avec Madame de Warens, au lieu de me suivre et de m'atteindre, comme ils l'auraient pu facilement, étant à cheval et moi à pied; il m'aimait très tendrement, mais il aimait aussi ses plaisirs."

Moreover, considering that this "tender father" had married a second wife, and kept possession of the little fortune which Jean-Jacques inherited from his mother, it is difficult to give him credit for the *probité sûre* which his son attributes to him. The idea of remaining in possession of the poor destitute wanderer's little fortune during his absence, says Jean-Jacques, "ne s'offrait pas à lui directement; mais elle agissait sourdement, sans qu'il s'en aperçût lui-même. Voila, je crois," he adds, "pourquoi, venu à Annecy sur mes traces, il ne me suivit pas jusqu'à Chambéri, où il était moralement sûr de m'atteindre." He follows this vainly palliated statement of unnatural and most criminal neglect, by remarking, that it is always dangerous to place our duties and interests in opposition; and says, by way of complete apology and excuse, that a person, when so circumstanced, "devient injuste et méchant dans le fait, sans avoir cessé d'être juste et bon dans l'âme."

I know no instance, throughout these painful volumes, in which his own faults are thus gently treated. But if his indulgence towards this very unnatural father, whose negligence was unquestionably the primal source of all his faults and misfortunes, is carried to an absurd excess, the reiterated expressions of admiration and esteem for Madame de Warens, which he evidently makes it a point of duty to repeat on every possible occasion throughout his life, appears to me to savour of absolute madness. As far as my reading and my memory enable me to judge, the character and conduct of this young woman are as detestable as any on record. She was not, indeed, guilty of any crimes of violence, her temper not being of the quality which inclined her to it; but it is scarcely unfair to say that, had this accident in her organization been different, her conduct, in this respect, would have been different also; for assuredly she has left us no reason to suppose that principle would have restrained her. Had the wretched boy who found in her detestable blandishments such a contrast to the ill-usage of his brutal master as bewildered his judgment for life—had he, throughout the whole of his melancholy record, persevered in painting her as amiable, despite the hateful qualities which his per-

verted judgment overlooked, or excused; his ceaseless protestations of unbounded and most exalted esteem, though not likely to produce more sympathy, would at least have created less astonishment. But when we find him relating anecdotes of her depravity, of which he was himself the victim, and acknowledging that he was so, his persevering praise looks like the morbid timidity of a conscience that finds relief both in unmeasured self-reprobation, and equally unmeasured charity, for kindred sins in others; and, while admiring the majestic strength of his indignation against those whose faults have very decidedly no analogy with his own, it is difficult not to remember that men have been known to fancy that they might atone—

> "——for faults they are inclined to,
> By damning those they have no mind to."

Yet it is scarcely fair, perhaps, to say this, after reading the passage in which he reproaches himself, with such evidently deep sincerity, for not having devoted himself to this utterly depraved woman during the latter years of her life. He *did*, as it seems, implore her most earnestly to take up her abode with him in Paris, when she had so involved her affairs as to have scarcely the means of existence left; but this she refused, probably preferring the life she was leading at home. But it was upon seeing her when she was between fifty and sixty years of age, upon occasion of his making a visit to Geneva, that he committed the unpardonable crime, as he appears to consider it, of not remaining with her.

He says of this meeting, "Je la revis; dans quel état, mon Dieu! *Quel avilissement!* Que lui restait-il de sa vertu première?" So that no delusion seems at that moment to have bewildered his judgment concerning her. Yet, notwithstanding her acknowledged *avilissement*, he perseveres in declaring her to have been altogether the most admirable person in the world. He exclaims, *à propos* of this state of *avilissement*, "Ah! c'était alors le moment d'acquitter ma dette"—(his debt!!!) "Il fallait tout quitter pour la suivre, m'attacher à elle jusqu'à sa dernière heure, et partager son sort, quel qu'il fut. Je

n'en fit rien. Je gémis sur elle, et ne la suivis pas. De tous les remords que j'ai sentis de ma vie, voilà le plus vif, et le plus permanent."

Now, considering that this woman had thrown him off, in the most unfeeling manner, about fifteen years before, when he was perfectly destitute, and most devotedly attached to her, and this for the sake of a young hairdresser whom she had somehow or other picked up during a short absence of Rousseau from her farm, (the management of which appears to have been his ostensible employment,) —considering that such was the cause and manner of their separation, those poignant regrets for not having devoted his life to her when they (almost accidentally) met again, really looks either like hypocrisy or madness. Nobody, I conceive, can believe it to be the first, who has read his true, his terribly true autobiography; and it would be equally impossible to charge seriously with madness, the most powerful and eloquent writer of his day. But it is easier to reject both madness and hypocrisy, as the causes of this strangely perverted judgment of an abandoned woman, concerning whose actions he was in no degree deceived, than to assign any other.

The only theory on the subject that I can suggest is, that from almost his earliest infancy, his moral sense was confused, bewildered, and depraved. What with his romances, his *homme de plaisir* for his *père excellent*, and Madame de Warens for his instructress, from the age of fifteen to five-and-twenty, he literally and *honestly* ceased to know right from wrong on many points; and having an extremely warm, gentle, and affectionate heart, he was unable to resist the slightest appearance of kindness; so that it was quite sufficient, in order to secure his unbounded esteem, that either men or women should persuade him of their affection for himself.

There was probably a strong mixture of vanity, as well as of tenderness, in this weakness; and his constitutional shyness, which rendered all demonstration of partiality more than commonly precious to his sensitive and timid self-love, left him totally incapable of passing a sane judgment on the real worth of any one who appeared to like or love him. Had this extraordinary man been fortunate

enough to have received, in his youth, juster notions of virtue and of vice, he would have been one of the greatest writers that ever lived. With this marvellous power of kindling and giving life to the dormant thoughts of others, by the seemingly simple, but exquisitely skilful expression of his own, he must, had he always felt and thought rightly, have been a most powerful agent for good.

So much has been said upon the more important point, of what Rousseau was, instead of what he might have been, that I see no great use in adding to it; but I heartily wish that some one could be found bold enough to give to the world a volume extracted from his confessions, his *promenades solitaires*, his "Emile," and his letters, from which no eye need turn in alarm, which the purest and most fastidious taste might be permitted to admire, and with which the most innocent heart might sympathize.

But such an attempt would, indeed, require boldness; for, on the one hand, it would be met with indignant reprehension by many, who would see in it nothing but a criminal effort to familiarize the innocent with the name and the genius of one whom, not to know, is to ensure the hearing that "your state is the more gracious—it is a vice to know him;" while, on the other, a host would not be wanting, ready to ridicule the enterprise, and inclined to exclaim, like the Italian language master who was shown an Ariosto castigato by the mother of one of his pupils,—

"Oh, miladi! Dey have left out de mosti besti parts!"

Nevertheless, I cannot but think that the extraordinary writer who, in these latter days, has been thought the most nearly to approach, by the magic skill of style, to the hitherto inimitable Jean-Jacques—I cannot but think that Madame George Sand would have done better had she prefixed the admirable essay she has just published, as a preface to "the Confessions," to such a compendium as I have mentioned. She, it seems, has thought otherwise; but surely she must, in sitting down to her editorial task, have breathed some such prayer as is put into the mouth of Lady Macbeth, and *effectually* have petitioned the gods to unsex her, in order to prepare for it.

To read this masterly preface without admiration is impossible; but it is equally so to see such a work put forth under the auspices of a woman, without deep regret. This regret is certainly not lessened by the admirable manner in which the character of Jean-Jacques is sketched, in this short but rich little essay. She makes the same admirable distinction, which, if I mistake not, Channing has, in some degree, made before, between *les grands hommes, et les hommes forts;* by which latter class she does not mean to distinguish the hero of the field, but *les hommes d'action,* who have distinguished themselves from their fellow-men by the successful activity of their faculties in any of the busy paths of life. As an illustration of her meaning, she says:—

"Jean-Jacques, d'une part, Jean-Jacques le penseur, l'homme de génie et de méditation, *le grand homme,* misérable, injust, et désespéré; de l'autre, Voltaire, Diderot, et les *Holbachiens,* les hommes du jour—désorganisant le société, sans songer sérieusement au lendemain; pensant, dénigrant et philosophant avec le multitude; hommes puissants, *hommes forts.* On les appelait philosophes parce que c'était la mode: tout ce que n'était pas catholique ou protestant s'appelait philosophe. Les *forts* déblayent le chemin, brisent les rochers, percent les forêts; ce sont les sapeurs de l'ambulante phalange humaine. Les autres (*les grands*) tracent les plans, projettent des lignes au loins, et lancent des ponts sur l'abîme de l'inconnu; ce sont les ingénieurs et les guides. Aux uns la force de l'esprit, et du caractère, aux autres la grandeur et l'elévation du genie."*

* "Jean-Jacques on one side, Jean-Jacques, the thinker, the man of genius and of meditation, *the great man,* miserable, unjust, and despairing; on the other, Voltaire, Diderot, and the *Holbachiens,* men of the day—disorganizing society without giving a serious thought to the morrow; thinking, fault-finding, philosophizing with the multitude; powerful men, and strong. They were called philosophers, because it was the fashion. Every one who was neither Catholic nor Protestant, called himself a philosopher. The strong men clear the way, excavate the rocks, pierce through forests, and are the sappers and miners of the restless human phalanx. The others (the great men) draw the plans, lay down the distant course, and throw bridges over the abyss of ignorance. These are the engineers and the guides. To the one belong firmness of character and strength of mind, to the other the grandeur and elevation of genius."

That between Rousseau, and the bold, dashing encyclopædists, there was, on all points of speculation, an immensely wide difference, as to motive and sincerity of conviction, it is impossible to doubt; and for this, if for nothing else, we must perhaps, in justice, permit Rousseau to remain in the niche assigned to him by George Sand, among the great. He was, as another great writer* truly says, "in earnest;" which is assuredly one most essential material of greatness.

Yet for all this, I cannot join the epithet *great* to the name of Rousseau, without being checked by a feeling that it is inappropriate. Carlyle says of him—

"He is not what I call a strong man," in which all the world, and George Sand among the rest, must agree: but when he adds (and most acutely too) that he is "a morbid, excitable, spasmodic man; at best intense rather than strong," how can we declare him great?

Nevertheless, with a disagreeable vacillation of mind which attends all one's speculations upon Jean-Jacques, one no sooner denies his right to it, than a multitude of splendid passages rise up to the memory, and argue, trumpet-tongued, against the injustice. Perhaps it is this very uncertainty as to the judgment we can conscientiously pass upon him, which still continues to give us so lively an interest in all that concerns him. The spirit, like an honest judge, wishes for more evidence, before the final sentence is pronounced, and cannot therefore pass by with indifference any object that relates to him. This may be one reason why so many pilgrims still yearly climb the steep path which leads to Les Charmettes, and still linger along the mountain paths which tradition points out as having been the most constantly frequented by him. This may be one reason. Another may be found in the pleasure which is always felt in verifying the accuracy of a portrait, whether of a landscape or a face. And who ever sketched like Rousseau? But few, probably, have ever felt as he did the deeply mysterious charm which a happy combination of natural objects is capable of producing on the spirits.

There is scarcely any point on which human beings

* Carlyle.

differ more essentially from each other, than in their susceptibility to the influence of this charm. It appears to be as innate in some individuals, and as completely absent in others, as is the power of appreciating harmony, or the want of it; and though education may, in both cases, outwardly supply the deficiency, I doubt if all the teaching in the world can make a man feel and enjoy the beauty of the landscape, if *the sense* be not born with him, any more than a defective ear can be taught to detect a false note.

That Jean-Jacques was gifted with this innate appreciation of the beautiful, is a fact that, I presume, no one will venture to dispute, although his descriptions of scenery never in any single instance assume that tone of high descriptive eloquence for which many writers, both in prose and verse, are celebrated. No language in the world, not even that of a child or a peasant, can be more perfect in its simplicity than that which is constantly employed by Rousseau, when describing the scenes he loves; and yet there will result from it so lively a picture, that it leaves a sensation of knowing the place described, more deeply impressed on the reader's mind, than is produced by the written pictures of any other author with whose writings I am acquainted. It is the recollection of these slightly traced, but animated sketches, which yearly sends so many travellers to visit the humble little dwelling called Les Charmettes.

Of the multitudes of English who visit Italy, I should conceive that about three-fourths were people of fortune, or people of fashion, or people laying claim to both, who take the long journey, either because it is *bon-ton* to take it, or because they are tired of England, or because their sons and daughters have particular reasons for wishing to meet the sons and daughters of some other *bon-ton-ists* who have gone thither before them. Of all these, no single individual, I imagine, will be found, who has condescended to make the historic and picturesque little capital of Savoy their *gîte* for a night or two, for the purpose of wandering where Jean-Jacques wandered, and for the sake of indulging a little melancholy meditation, within the walls where he sometimes fancied himself so

happy, and sometimes knew himself to be so deplorably the reverse:—

"What recks it them? What need they? They are sped."

They know that my Lord This and my Lady That are at Rome, and to Rome they must of course go too, as fast as bad posters and goodly mountains will let them. Les Charmettes! What on earth can they have to do at Les Charmettes? Sleep two nights at Chambéry! Why should they sleep two nights at Chambéry?—On, courier, on!—Depend upon it they are right—they could not by possibility gain anything by the delay, and they might, *par l'impossible*, lose their temper.

But, of the other fraction of British wanderers, the objects are very different, and it is doing them a real kindness to draw their attention, whenever an opportunity occurs, to every object that may awaken the imagination, or touch the heart. All such will find their account in paying a visit to Les Charmettes, despite all the faults and weaknesses of the man of genius who once made it his home.

I by no means, however, intend to recommend an *étude suivie* of the works of Jean-Jacques, to all who compose this fourth part of English travellers; on the contrary, I will frankly and honestly tell them all that I think they had much better let it alone. But without this *étude suivie*, they may all venture to know enough of what this "melancholy Jacques" has done to make his name endure as it has done, to render the sight of the dwelling he inhabited, and the scenery he described, profoundly interesting. And truly, unless the pilgrims to Les Charmettes *do* know something about the poor philosopher who followed, with such affecting earnestness, his almost avoided studies beneath the roof of that *triste*-looking little mansion, it will be scarcely worth their while to visit it; for assuredly its being, though close to Chambéry, "retirée et solitaire comme si l'on était à cent lieues," is almost its only charm. Rousseau himself thus describes the place:—

"Entre deux côteaux assez élevés est un petit vallon, nord et sud, au fond duquel coule une rigole entre des

cailloux et des arbres. Le long de ce vallon, à mi-côte, sont quelques maisons éparses, fort agréable pour quiconque aime un asîle un peu sauvage et retiré. Après avoir essayé deux ou trois de ces maisons, nous choisimes enfin le plus jolie. La maison était très-logeable. Au devant un jardin en terrasse, une vigne au-dessus, un verger au-dessous, vis-à-vis un petit bois de châtaigniers, une fontaine à portée."*

Nothing can be more accurate than this description; and there it is now, to all outward appearance very much the same as it must have been in 1736, when Rousseau, and the woman whom the neglect of his father had made his only protector, and his only resource against absolute starvation, took possession of it.

But although the house itself, and its very ordinary-looking appendages in the way of garden and vineyard, have little beauty or charm of any kind, the view from it is beautiful, and precisely of the character which was likely to enchant such an imagination as that of Jean-Jacques. Mountain rises above mountain in the distance, but that distance not very remote, and the ever varying effect of light and shade, produced by the bold and capricious hills thrown about in all directions, and to which every hour of the day gives a new aspect as it passes by, must have made it to him a source of endless enjoyment. Nor was it without deep interest that we trod the path through the vineyard, above the house, which tradition declares to have been his constant morning walk, and the point from whence he saw the sun rise, as he has described it. As this description is very short, I am tempted to transcribe it, for the use of such as may not, *must* not, turn over his forbidden pages in search of a passage which is as bright as the scene it describes; but I will not translate it; I have not the courage, or rather the audacity, to attempt it.

* "Between two tolerably high hills is a little valley, north and south, at the bottom of which runs a brook, among pebbles and trees. Along this valley, half way up the hill, are a few scattered houses, very agreeable for such as love a somewhat wild and remote asylum. After having tried two or three of these houses, we chose at last the prettiest. The house was very habitable; before it a terrace-garden, a vineyard above, an orchard below, opposite, a little wood of chesnuts, a fountain close at hand."

"On le voit," it is the sun of which he speaks, "s'annoncer de loin par les traits de feu qu'il lance au devant de lui. L'incendie augmente; l'orient paraît tout en flammes; à leur éclat, on attend l'astre longtemps avant qu'il se montre: à chaque instant, on croit le voir paraître; on le voit enfin. Un point brillant part comme un éclair, et remplit aussitôt tout l'espace; le voile des ténèbres s'efface et tombe: l'homme reconnait son séjour et le trouve embelli. La verdure a pris durant la nuit une vigueur nouvelle; le jour naissant qui l'éclair, les premiers rayons qui la dorent, la montrent couverte d'un brillant réseau de rosée, qui réfléchit à l'œil la lumière et les couleurs. Les oiseaux en chœur se réunissent, et saluent de concert le père de la vie; en ce moment, pas un seul ne se tait. Leur gazouillement, faible encore, est plus lent et plus doux que dans le reste de la journée; il se sent de la langueur d'un paisible réveil. Le concours de tous ces objets porte aux sens une impression de fraîcheur, qui semble pénétrer jusqu'à l'âme. Il y a là un quart d'heure d'enchantment, auquel nul homme ne résiste: un spectacle si grand, si beau, si delicieux, n'en laisse aucun de sang-froid."

There is nothing "spasmodic" here, and even Mr. Carlyle himself must, I think, confess that there is something of *greatness* in the writer who can produce a picture so glowing with light and life, in so few and simple words. For myself I confess that, as far as style goes, I have no power of conceiving anything more nearly approaching perfection; and it is such passages as these which account for and excuse the pertinacious attachment which has existed through a hundred long years, and which continues to exist, for his name, despite the many clouds which rest upon it. It was with this picture, and a few others sketched in the same style, in our thoughts, that I and my companion set off, after an early dinner at our comfortable Hôtel de l'Europe, to walk to Les Charmettes.

Chambéry is not greatly celebrated for its architectural beauty, nor is there much to admire in it, save the picturesque antiquity of its Alpine environs. Nevertheless, it is difficult to ramble about the town in any direction without interest, and the walk aux Charmettes is full of

it from various sources. I never visit any spot redolent of the memory of those whose renown has left a train of light behind them without being struck by the manner in which every trifle concerning them is hoarded, by even the least enlightened peasant of the neighbourhood.

In naming Rousseau to some labourers at work by the road-side, within a few hundred yards of his residence, they seemed to know him as intimately as if he were living among them still; and one of them, advancing a few steps with us, pointed to a bank of periwinkle, exclaiming, in rather a sentimental tone, "Voilà, madame! Voilà la véritable pervenche!" And, as the plant is growing precisely on the spot which Rousseau describes as that where Madame de Warens pointed it out to him on their going first to Les Charmettes, it is likely enough to be the *rejeton* of the identical *pervenche* to which he alludes with such a lingering feeling of attachment, when many, many years afterwards he chanced to come upon the same flower, and remembered that she had (vainly) called his attention to it, when they were mounting together the hill which led to the house.

The sort of eloquence with which, by about half a dozen words, he contrives to make one feel the regret with which he looks back to the time when he *might* have looked at it, at her bidding, has certainly been felt and treasured by the generations which have come after him, with more of love and sympathy than was probably ever produced by any other passage equally short and trivial:—convincing proof that when a chord of true feeling is touched, the vibration will extend to everything that is in tune with it.

Had Rousseau conceived an affection as deeply sincere, and as tenaciously constant, to any object within the possible reach of esteem, his exquisitely tender allusions to it would be inexpressibly touching; for never did words more surely echo the very throbbings of the heart, than did those of Rousseau when he speaks of her. Most truly do I believe that all the most essential faults in the character of Rousseau were the effects of this blind, and every way ill-placed attachment. He says himself, of their first interview—

"Cette époque de ma vie a décidé de mon caractère. J'étais au milieu de ma seizième année."

Poor boy! It was a dangerous age to fall into the hands of vice, appearing in the garb of virtue; and never again, as is most painfully evident from every page of his autobiography, never again did he recover any clear notion respecting the difference between right and wrong. He was destitute, and she fed him, and most literally did he worship the benevolence which led her to do so. Of their first meeting, he says—

"C'était les jours des rameaux, de l'année 1728. Je dois me souvenir du lieu; je l'ai souvent depuis mouillé de mes larmes, et couvert de mes baisers. Que ne puis-je entourer d'un balustre d'or cette heureuse place! Que ne puis-je attirer les hommages de toute laterre!"

The man who, at the age of sixty, could thus write of a woman of whom he has narrated such hateful anecdotes can scarcely be considered in possession of a perfectly sane understanding; and let us hope that some of the many moral delinquencies to which he has pleaded guilty may be judged leniently for that reason.

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There are fewer memorials of Rousseau at Les Charmettes, than at Montmorency; at least, there are fewer personal relics. At the Hermitage, you are shown the table at which he wrote the "Heloise," and the old spinette whereby he was wont to soothe himself, by playing the sweet melodies of his own "Devin du village." These, and various other remembrances of him, preserved with the deepest reverence at Montmorency, make one feel more in his presence in the little parlour there, than in the totally unfurnished and desolate looking rooms at Les Charmettes.

There is still, however, a bower in the little garden, the shrubs of which are doubtless the descendants of those which rendered it *frais et touffu*, when he was wont to take his coffee there "deux ou trois fois la semaine," and near to which was his "autre petite famille, au bout du jardin"—his bees. To the right of the door, a white stone, bearing an inscription, said to be the composition of

Madame D'Epinay, was inserted in the wall, by one of the commissioners sent by the Convention of 1792, to the department of Mont Blanc. The inscription is still legible, and is as follows:—

"Réduit par Jean-Jacque habité,
Tu me rapellas son génie,
Sa solitude, sa fierté,
Et ses malheurs et sa folie.
A la gloire, à la vérité
Il osa consacrer sa vie
Il fut toujours persécuté,
Ou par lui-même, ou par l'envie."

The last two lines, at least, have some meaning in them.

The little room in which Rousseau slept is over the vestibule, and its one window is immediately over the door of entrance. If this be the chamber in which he pursued the solitary studies of which he has given so interesting a sketch, and which made, in fact, the most important part of his singularly imperfect education, he must sometimes have been at a loss to find room for the volumes he borrowed from his friends at Chambéry.

Of course, I failed not, according to custom, to look about me for some relic that might remind me of the spot; and I spied a very flourishing patch of *immortelles*, growing beside the gate by which he passed to the part of the garden where he had established the observatory, his nightly use of which so terrified the peasants of the neighbourhood. Could I find a better emblem to remind me of the dwelling of Jean-Jacques? I thought not, and accordingly possessed myself of a handful of the enduring blossoms. On the other side of the little gate was another flower, also in full blossom; it was the "fleur des veuves." And here too was an emblem for me; but not wishing to join *la veuve* to *l'immortel* in my memory more than I could help, I left the ominous-looking flower untouched, and giving a last look at the melancholy mansion, turned away, and returned to Chambéry by the path that tradition states to have been the favourite and the daily walk of Jean-Jacques.

Aix-les-Bains.

PART I.

"La Suisse et la Savoie sont deux sœurs jumelles qui se tiennent et se ressemblent, filles de la nature qui les a dotée d'attraits égaux—cependant, de tous les coins de l'Europe les curieux viennent continuellement en Suisse par légions—tandis qu'ils ne font que traverser la Savoie si elle se trouve sur leur chemin."

L'ITALIE PITTORESQUE.

HAVING enjoyed a few days given to old Chambéry—which one of its veracious chroniclers gravely describes as owing its name to the accident of Noah's Ark having rested, when the waters subsided, upon the point which forms the bold summit of its neighbour Nivolet, whence Cham descended to the plain, and founded the city which still bears his name—having greatly enjoyed a few days in this venerable little capital, we started early, on a bright September morning, for Aix-les-Bains. The drive is beautiful, and so is the hotel to which it took us, and so was the breakfast, and the flowers that entered with it, and so was the broad terrace beneath our windows, decorated with the loveliest flowering shrubs, in stately boxes, reminding one of the royal orangeries of Versailles; pomegranate, oleander, azalia, cape jessamine, and flowering myrtle, all in perfection, and displaying their delicate beauty under the shelter of the giant mountains that at no great distance formed their back-ground, in most lovely and effective contrast.

Everybody who goes to Aix-les-Bains ought, as I think, to betake himself forthwith to l'Hôtel de la Poste, provided—that is to say, that he can secure rooms looking upon the garden at Guillaud's *third* hotel. From these

windows, the combination formed by the craggy termination of the Mont du Chat, and of the richly-cultivated upland beneath, produces one of the most striking pictures imaginable. As usual, we were early in setting out, and as the pretty drive was but a short one, we were early, too, at our beautiful breakfast-table. Numberless wreaths of semi-transparent clouds still hung upon the mountain's side, seeming, from point to point, to be suspended in festoons, by the jutting crags that pierced the bristling mass in all directions. The sun tinted those drapery clouds here and there with something of a rainbow colouring, but so fleetingly, that almost before we could exclaim to each other, "How beautiful!" the brightness was past. Vines festooned from tree to tree in every conceivable variety of graceful curve, divided the foreground with groves of acacias and tufted chestnuts; and I remarked one fine catalpa among them, with a lingering bunch or two of blossoms remaining among its broad foliage. It was, in truth, one of those heaven-blessed holiday spots, which it is impossible to look upon without a feeling of pious gratitude for having been permitted to do so; and the consciousness of its remoteness from one's ordinary home, adds not a little to this grateful feeling of triumphant joy, at not having lived and died without getting there.

The fulness of my contentment upon this occasion would, I think, have been quite perfect, had it not been for the recollection of sundry dear ones who would have enjoyed it all as keenly as myself and my companion, but whom, I can scarcely hope, will ever make their way thither. And yet to those who journey from England to Italy by the Mont Cenis, nothing can be much more easy of access. But I am often astonished at the, to me, preternatural feeling of difficulty which many, with whom I converse, seem to experience at the idea of doing or seeing anything that would take them a few miles away from the *grande route*. I often fancy that they must have within them something of that quality of matter which, when it is once propelled, gives it so strong a propensity to go forward in a straight line, that nothing less than a *planetful* of attraction can conquer

it; or else it must be such a devoted attachment to the "go-ahead" system as would render every deviation from the direct onward course a positive evil.

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Our lingering breakfast ended, and all arrangements made for our accomodation as long as the "Eaux d'Aix" continued to be our head-quarters, we set out as usual to explore; and, to say the honest truth, there is not very much in the town or immediate vicinity of Aix to justify a very ardent recommendation of it, to those who seek to fix themselves at a "watering-place" in the intention of being enchanted hourly by the scenery which every lazy half-hour's stroll shall bring before their eyes. Baden-Baden, Ems, or the Baths of Lucca, may do better for such; but to all who will submit to the trouble of either riding or walking for a mile or two in pursuit of their scenery, Aix-les-Bains offers as great attraction as any place I have ever visited. Of the medicinal qualities of its baths, I know nothing, and very little of its social gaieties, for the "season" was well nigh over when we got there. There was still, however, a party of about twenty at the *table-d'hôte*, many of whom were evidently invalids, and one fine-grown, tall young Englishman had lost the use of his legs; which may lead us to suppose that an ancient rhyme, which I have seen quoted, as applicable to the "Douche" of Aix, may truly describe its qualities:—

> "Puis par cette eau son corp décrépite,
> Transmué fut par manière subite,
> En jeune gars, frais, gracieux, et droit."

The company talked of balls and belles that had passed away, and of pic-nics that still seemed to be going on among the loiterers that were left. The room in which we dined was a good one, and the dinner excellent, and I was told that the *salle de bal* was elegant and commodious. So much for the accommodations of Aix as a watering-place. The efforts made at all places of summer *rendezvous* to render them attractive, are so very nearly the same everywhere, that it is not necessary to enter more minutely into particulars; but what is not the same

everywhere—namely, the never-ending variety of lovely landscape, by which indulgent nature loves to enchant all those of her children who have eyes to see, and hearts to feel her munificence,—of this, as displayed in the neighbourhood of these baths, it may not be lost time to speak, as every hint faithfully given, which may increase the traveller's power of judiciously choosing his *pied à terre* for summer enjoyment, is worth giving and worth receiving.

The first thing I would remark in favour of Aix-les-Bains is, that notwithstanding the grand and savage wildness, and solemn solitude of many of the scenes in its neighbourhood, it is as well furnished with all the comforts of life as Brighton or Cheltenham; and the next, perhaps more important still, is that, despite its remoteness, it is within the most perfectly convenient reach of all the numerous host of travellers who intend to pass the winter in Italy, but who wish not to approach it too nearly till the first favours of its bright summer are on the wane.

One day, then, having been given to Aix, its hot springs, its cool gardens, etc.; the next was devoted to the Lake of Bourget, and the celebrated Monastery and Mausoleum of Hautecombe. Were this Lake of Bourget at about one-quarter of its actual distance from Aix, the attractions of this remote bathing-place would certainly be very greatly increased, for then one of the loveliest lake-scenes that nature ever produced, would be within reach of its visitors, without putting them to any disagreeable exertion of strength. But as it is, I am fain to confess that the walk, or the donkey-ride from the town to the lake, is much too long to permit such frequent returns to the enchanting shores of Bourget, as all sojourners at Aix would desire. The road, however, is perfectly level, and some part of it sheltered from the sun by an avenue of trees; but these consolations are not sufficient to compensate for the dust, the loss of time, and the fatigue which this long and uninteresting mile and a half of high-road inflicts upon those who would wish never to lose sight of Bourget while remaining in its neighbourhood. But, though on foot, we reached the

lake at last, and having gazed upon it very deliberately for some minutes, both my companion and myself ventured to pronounce that it might well bear to be put in competition with any and every lake we had seen elsewhere, and which truly are not a few. The seven or eight thousand feet of the Walzmann mountain, which rises with a perpendicular frontage of solid rock from the dark-green waters of the Konigsee, unquestionably give a grandeur to the Austrian lake, which the Savoy one has not; but this feature, though a most noble one, is not wished for, or wanted, at the Lake of Bourget.

Though still on the unsunny side of the Alps, the brightness of the climate we were approaching made itself both to be felt and seen; and though no thrilling majestic mass of rock threw its deep shade over the waters, we were in no humour to lament the loss of it, but condescended to be perfectly well pleased by the Claude-like reflection of the Claude-like sky instead. In short, while standing on the shore of Lake Bourget, waiting for the boat that was to take us across it to the Abbey of Hautecombe, though we studiously recalled to memory every other lake we had ever seen, we both agreed that we had not the very slightest wish to have any other objects before our eyes than those which we were then gazing on. Yet at that moment we had by no means seen what was most beautiful in the Lake of Bourget, for it is not till you are well launched upon its bosom, and able to look round upon the magnificent frame of mountains which encloses it, that you become aware of the singularly happy combination of objects which make up the picture. Nothing, to be sure, can be much more unsightly and clumsy-looking than the great, wide, flat-bottomed boat which offers itself to your acceptance on reaching Port-Puer, as they call the bit of ground, looking like a timber-yard, from which you embark; but when you have condescended to enter this rough-looking machine, and have had the rude, but very effective awning stretched over your head, and have discovered the comfort of having a stout rail behind you to lean against, you must be very earnestly bent upon quarrelling with the goods the gods provide,

if you do not find yourself superlatively happy and contented.

The difficulty of abstaining from an attempt to describe such scenery as that which blesses the eye as you cross this lake, after a few delicious hours have been passed in gazing on it, is really very great. The mind inevitably becomes so full of all the images which have been offered to it, and which it has received with so much eager avidity as to have left no room for anything else, that it finds a positive relief in pouring forth its fulness. But though I am ready to confess that there may be some mixture of selfish gratification in describing what one loves to think of, the attempt to do it is certainly never made without a good-natured wish to make all who will listen share in the pleasure you have enjoyed. Nay, notwithstanding all the profound criticisms that have been given to the world, upon the absurdity of attempting to describe what is indescribable, I am of opinion that the reading of scenes which you have never seen, nor are ever likely to see, is by no means waste of time. It is good for us all to know how bounteous the God of nature has been in decorating the habitation in which he has ordained that man shall dwell during his threescore and ten years of mortal life; it is good that we should be told of it, if accident prevents our full acquaintance with the fact by means of our own experience; and, moreover, by way of encouragement to describers, it should be remembered that, if among the dozen who may yawn over their efforts, there should be one kindled thereby into an energetic determination to look forth upon the scene himself, the dozen yawners may be very conscientiously put *in non cale*, for the good done incontestably exceeds the evil.

Now, then, having made this apology for myself, let me indulge a little in recalling the Lake of Bourget, as I saw it, through the bright clear air of a September morning, while every imaginable circumstance that could increase the enjoyment which earth, air, and water have power to give, was in full action. Nor should the blessing of warmth be left out of the catalogue, though it would not sound picturesque, perhaps, to add *fire* to the list of

elements which contributed to the enjoyment of the scene. But the autumn of Savoy, such as we saw it during last September, is as glowing in its warm air and rich colouring as that of Italy herself. So well did we know this indeed, that we took care, as usual, to have a cool hour or two of the morning before us when we started; for our purpose was to have a long day of wandering enjoyment; and we know of old, that the cold chicken and ham part of the preparation for this, is not more essentially necessary to its success than the enlisting in our service the earliest hours of light. And well on this occasion, as on all others, were we paid for the trifling exertion which it requires to leave your bed a little before you are quite tired of it; for when we embarked, our course took us westward, and the effect produced by the rising sun behind us, upon the majestic range of mountains we were approaching, was singularly beautiful. One after another, in just precedence, according to their respective altitudes, point after point of the Mont du Chat became illuminated by that indescribable, rose-coloured light, which seems to belong to Italy, and of which she lends a gleam now and then to her particular friends and near neighbours. By degrees the smooth bosom of the lake itself began to reflect the same "celestial rosy red," not, however, without strong masses of shade still resting upon it here and there, sometimes from the tall summit of a mighty mountain, and sometimes from a tower or a tree, that threw its firmly-cut *silhouette* upon the water.

The object of our voyage was to reach the Abbey of Hautecombe, which seems as you approach it to nestle itself shyly under the protection of the towering Mont du Chat, that rises immediately above it. It is, perhaps, when this delicious little voyage is about half over, that the beauty of the excursion is at its height; for by that time, the noble abbey itself has become a conspicuous feature in the landscape, and the surrounding mountains of Azi, Grenier, the Mont du Chat, and Nivolet, together with the hill and castle of Chatillon at the northern extremity of the lake, may all be contemplated, as the rowers rest awhile upon their oars, and discourse to you

in a first-rate style of legendary gossip of all the wonders, not a few of them being considerably *super* the ordinary course of nature, belonging by right immemorial to the principal objects of the landscape.

The elder of our three boatmen—for the heavy craft could not be made to move, I believe, with less—was the greatest orator; but the man evidently second in dignity, never failed to begin talking as soon as his senior ceased, and I was greatly amused by observing the difference which the "march of mind" during the last thirty years (for by so much did their ages differ) had made between them. Though this mental marching has not gone on in the same double-quick time along the "flinty roads of Savoy," as in the highways and byways of England, it was very evident that the education of the younger man had had much more of the modern *positif* in it, than that of the elder. The old man, for instance, made no scruple of telling us, with all the gravity of history, that a certain castle, of which we faintly caught the outline in the dim distance, had been the scene of one of the most remarkable adventures ever known. It had been destroyed by fire, he said, a good many years ago; he could not state precisely the year; but everybody knew the fact; and that the baron to whom the castle at that time belonged, had two very beautiful daughters, whom he pretended to love very much, but whom he really used very cruelly, never letting them hunt or dance like other young baronesses, but keeping them shut up like prisoners in his castle, and scarcely permitting any of the young knights, who at that time were always riding about the country, to get sight of them. But he was justly punished for all this; for when the fire happened, the two beautiful young ladies were seen to walk forth in the midst of the flames and the smoke, spring upon two black horses behind two black knights, and gallop away before the eyes of their terrified father and all his household. As they were never heard of afterwards, and as both horses and knights breathed forth fire and flame as violently as the burning castle itself, everybody believed that the devil himself had sent a few of his own combustibles into the castle, and a pair of his own horses, with riders to match,

to carry away the young ladies. But be this as it may, there is at least one fact that is perfectly certain—namely, that the blackened walls of the castle and its ramparts are to this day haunted by the departed spirits of the cruel baron and his imprudent daughters, and that none of the country people, far or near, ever venture within sight of the doomed spot after sunset.

PART II.

By the time the boatman's story was finished, the sun was high enough to render the rowing, slow as it was, a fatiguing operation; and the old boatman reposed both his tongue and his oars for a moment or two, and then began his younger partner; he did not "take up the wondrous tale" of his companion, but, in a much more historic vein, and with evident consciousness of his own superiority, he communicated various scraps of local information. He told us that till within the last half century, the young girls of Savoy used to wear their petticoats ornamented with rows of ribbon round the bottom, and that the number of rows indicated the amount of the portion they were to have in marriage, and the consequence was, he said, that the poor girls, if they were pretty enough, always got the best partners, because the young men, when their spirits were up, could not bear to show themselves so pitiful as always to be looking for a rich girl to dance with, though he could not pretend to say that these financial petticoats made any essential difference as to the prejudices of the country in favour of a rich wife. Moreover, he told us, with a great deal of antiquarian dignity, that the invention of Savoy cakes, as well known in Paris, he believed, as at Aix, or Chambéry, was at least five hundred years old, for that they were first made by the cook of Amedée VI., for a banquet given to the Emperor Louis V., at Chambéry; and that these cakes were gilt, and were made to imitate the forms of the

neighbouring mountains, and were offered to the noble company by the Count of Savoy himself, and his noblest barons, all on horseback, and all armed cap-à-pie. Now all this, as we learned afterwards, was perfectly historic, and as it was accompanied with no mention whatever of ghosts, devils, or fairies, it is impossible to deny that the younger man seemed to have received a more modern education than his companion.

I was almost sorry when we reached the landing-place at Hautecombe; not exactly perhaps because I wanted more stories either from the elder or younger boatman, but because the exquisite loveliness of the scene we were quitting, and the lazy luxury in which we had enjoyed it, left no hope that we could increase our enjoyment by stepping out of our ugly-looking, but most commodious bark, in order to walk up the steep bank which leads to the abbey of Hautecombe. But we soon found upon this occasion, as we do upon many, if we look the right way for it, that a pleasant route pleasantly passed over, is only a blessing *de plus*, and that neither years nor miles are to be regretted, if we lose not our way as we go. In truth, this expedition to Hautecombe must rest for ever as a red-letter day in our calendar; for during the many bright hours of it dedicated to this excursion, all that we did seemed to "better what was done."

The position of the abbey is so beautiful, that I think the most picturesque of poets, even Milton himself, might go on dreaming for ever, without being able to conceive any spot more exquisitely lovely, or more aptly fitted for a royal tomb than that on which this venerable sepulchre stands. Some, indeed, might fancy that there would be more of historic gloom, were the stately walls enshrined in groves of sable cypress, or of mournful yew; but I think there is more poetic fitness as it is. The old counts and dukes of Savoy were a race, if their chroniclers may be trusted, as much beloved as honoured, cherishing their own mountains and their native lakes with all the parental love of native sovereigns, and all the filial fondness of long-descended children of the soil. Then where could their honoured relics be left to repose so suitably as on a spot that seems, in its wild yet smiling loneliness, to be a

type of the country so every way their own? And although no sepulchral gloom rests upon it, there is enough of sacred loveliness to render it in every way a fitting place for such a purpose. Stand on the tower of Hautecombe and look around, and you will find that you are shut in by a circle of majestic mountains, once the stern barrier, but now only the most impressive charm of beauteous Savoy; and wide as is the extent of the landscape enclosed within this glorious frame, you will feel that it has, nevertheless, the air of being enshrined and sacred from the world beyond. But the seclusion of the holy abbey itself is closer still; for, whatever the actual fact may be, it looks as if it were utterly unapproachable, save by the means of which we availed ourselves to reach it.

Immediately behind it towers the enormous mountain called "the Mont du Chat," with its three sharp peaks forming the singularly hostile-looking barrier known by the name of the "Dent du Chat;" and the little esplanade on which the building stands is so narrow, that, did we not know it was formed by a morsel of the solid rock, we might be apt to fear that this splendid reliquary, and all the honoured dust it contains, would, in process of time, be washed away by the gentle but incessant movement of the transparent lake, for its *wavelets* seem for ever and for ever to kiss the foot of the sepulchre, as if to do it homage.

Of the interior of the abbey, the best description, I think, for those who will not travel far enough a-field to look at it, is to tell them, that in its costly and admirably well-imagined restorations (rendered necessary by the savage devastations of the French army) it rivals and equals, in happiness of effect, though not in the splendour of its dimensions, the restored shrine of St. Denis. It is certainly impossible to praise too highly the exquisite taste and the learned skill which have been displayed in the restoration of the beautiful little chapel belonging to the abbey. All the richly gothic ornaments have been carved in the beautiful white stone called pierre de Seyssel, in exact imitation of the fragments that had been left; and wherever these fragments were large and perfect

enough to admit it, they have been introduced into the modern work without the slightest injury to the harmony of the whole.

The entering this small, but exquisitely beautiful church from the beautiful scenery without, produces one of the most striking transitions I remember, by the contrast of the delicate purity of its snow-white material, with the gorgeous colouring of the lake and its banks. Of the monuments it would be about equally difficult and useless to speak in detail; the skill with which they have been re-arranged, and indeed, for the most part, reconstructed, leaves nothing to wish for the general effect. Some very good modern painted glass adds greatly to the beauty of the whole, and with all my love of *genuwine* old stones, I should have been greatly ashamed of myself had I fallen so low into the Smellfungus line as to have murmured because these records of the last seven or eight hundred years were the work of yesterday. It was not here that for the first time in my life I felt that the impressions made by poetry are (to me) stronger than those produced by history; for when I read the name of JEANE DE MONTFORT on one of the splendid tombs, I thought more of Joanna Baillie than of any counts or countesses either of Savoy or de Vaud. Nevertheless, I looked with great and befitting respect on the effigies of a certain Boniface, umwhile Archbishop of Canterbury, a prince of the noble house of Savoy, who, though lent to us as primate during a few years, left his mortal remains to repose among the illustrious dust of his ancestors, having quitted England to visit his brother, the reigning prince, and died on his native soil, in 1270.

Both examined in detail, and enjoyed as a most picturesque *coup d'œil*, the chapel of the Hautecombe is full of attraction, and is decidedly one of the buildings that it is more agreeable to enter for the first time than to leave for the last. Whenever it happens there is a feeling of melancholy produced by this last glance, which seems like a tax paid for the pleasure of the first; but nevertheless it is good to pay it, for it goes to enrich the general exchequer of memory, and if we did not find it there on looking back, our treasury of recollections would be all

the poorer. And so we turned away from this noble sepulchre, now closed for ever; for the old race of Savoy princes being extinct, "its holy earth" is not again to be broken, except for the interment of the venerable widow of the late King of Sardinia.

Our very patient guide next conducted us to the great gates of the abbey, in which there is a handsome set of apartments kept ever ready to receive this Queen-dowager of Sardinia, who, from time to time, gives a few days or weeks there to religious retirement. The monastery still exists, and all the buildings appear in excellent repair, but the number of the community is small. Having seen as much of the establishment as travelling ladies are permitted to visit, our guide welcomed our reappearance at the gate, where he had waited for us, with rather a joyous air, exclaiming, as we again prepared to follow him, "Ah ça; à present, madame, nous avons un autre miracle à vous faire voir. Nous allons maintenant à la Fontaine des Merveilles," and it was quite clear that now, at least, he took a strong personal interest in the expedition. The walk from the abbey to this "Fontaine des Merveilles" is along the border of the lake, and occupied us about twenty minutes, perhaps, during which time we gave as much attention as it was possible to draw from the charming landscape before us to the good man's eager eloquence on the subject of its mystic qualities. Nobody that really knew anything about the matter, he said, ever pretended to have the least doubt left as to the miraculous source of the fountain. "Is it locked up?" I demanded; "or is everybody that goes by permitted to see it?"

"Locked up!" he repeated; "everybody that goes by permitted to see it! Yes, it is locked up," he replied, after making a curious grimace, accompanied by a flourish of his head, which might, I thought, be intended for the sign of the cross thrown up in the air, "and *certainement*," with strong emphasis, "*certainement*, everybody that passes by is not permitted to see it."

"I suppose you mean that we are to pay for looking at it?" said I.

"Pay!" he again echoed; "the payment must be offered beforehand, madame, and must be given by prayer." The

good man looked so exceedingly solemn, that I thought we were touching upon themes always better avoided on Popish ground. Wherever I find people believing sincerely, I have respect for their belief, and think the miraculous agency of their saints as unsuitable a subject of pleasantry for Roman Catholics as the higher mysteries of our religion are to us. So I attempted to change the subject, and began talking of the lake, and of the "Rocher de Châtillon," dimly visible at the extremity of it. But when I began to inquire if he remembered the visit of the celebrated M. de Lamartine to the residence of M. de Châtillon, placed, as we had heard, with its beautiful gardens, amidst the ruins of the old Château de Sept-Tours, he shook his head, and declared that he knew nothing about the monsieur I talked of, though he knew Châtillon and M. de Châtillon well;—but all *that* was another day's work, and we should find La Fontaine des Merveilles quite enough to satisfy us for to-day; and the next minute he halted, exclaiming, "Voila donc! Nous sommes arrivés." The spot, like all others near it, was very beautiful, and in addition to the lake, and the majestic mountains round it, there was a little grove of chestnut trees, with benches of stone scattered here and there in the welcome shade, which suggested, as plainly as any *sign* could have done that it was there the felicity hunters of Lake Bourget and Aix-les-Bains were wont to recreate themselves during the least romantic, though perhaps not the least agreeable hour of their day's rambling. "This is a place for pic-nics!" we exclaimed.

"Je le crois bien," was the gay reply; "et voila! *la fontaine!*"

"Fountain!" said I; "I see nothing but a few pebbles at the bottom of a little pond, completely dry. Is this your fountain?"

The man then led us to the rocky bank, beneath which was the little irregular reservoir I had remarked, and jumping down into it, thrust his fingers into a fissure of what appeared to me to be a block of limestone. "It is from this aperture," he said, "that the water flows when it pleases those who have the keeping of it to let it run." To this he could add nothing whatever in the

way of information, though enough in way of the commentary, illustration, and anecdote. He assured us that this intermitting was affected, visibly, by no change of weather—that in winter, as in summer, its caprices defied all calculation, that its return was often vainly waited for after the most violent rain, and as often unexpectedly witnessed during long drought. All this we have, of course, inquired into since our visit to Hautecombe, and find that our informant exaggerated in no point respecting the complete uncertainty of the water's return. It is this uncertainty, as we have since been told, which causes all the wonder excited by this particular spring; for intermittent springs have frequently been met with, but in other cases, if the Savoy savans say sooth, the return of the water has been at regular intervals, which circumstance, they say, renders it easy to account for the phenomenon; but here, at Hautecombe, everything is most delightfully unintelligible, dark, and mysterious; and I sat down in a beautifully shady nook to watch for the water with as much impatience as if its coming, or its not coming, was to be to me, as well as to those who have followed me into the world at the interval of a few dozens of years, a symbol of coming joy or woe.

For, be it known to all whom it may concern, no one who sits beside that mystic basin without seeing the propitious stream flow into it, may hope to find the heart that should answer to their heart, faithful; for, as the current of that living water pauses, falters, and turns aside from the eyes that are longing to behold it, so does the living stream that animated the being they best love pause, falter, and turn aside from its right course, madly careering in another, wherein its unstable current anticipates a climate brighter and more congenial than the last; or, to state the mysterious fact in more suitable language, borrowed from a native chronicle, "Si, par malheur, elle (la source) disparaît à votre aspect, et que vous attendiez en vain son retour, hélas! l'oracle à parlé, jeune beauté, consolez vous."

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We had brought with us, as I doubt not many hundreds had done before, wherewithal to make a mid-day repast

under the shelter of the chestnut-trees; and while we all three "munched and munched," our guide, who divided his time pretty equally between eating, listening with his ear close to the aperture in the rock, and talking of all the most wondrous stories he could remember, began (as his memory went further and further back to furnish his anecdotes) to talk to us of the Empress Josephine. In none of his narratives was he so pathetic as in that which related to her, and there was positively something exceedingly touching in the manner in which he recounted it, although, from the age of the man, it was quite impossible that he could have remembered anything about it himself. The unhappy lady, he said, had passed whole days beneath the shade of these chestnut-trees, in the hope of seeing the friendly fountain pour forth its waters at her feet—but in vain! ever, and always in vain! Other people, of all ages and all conditions, came in plenty, as they always did, he added, when the winter weather did not make the lake too rough for the pleasure-boats, and scarcely one of them that, sooner or later, if they had patience to wait till the poor empress lady was gone, did not see the water rush forth from the rock with ten times more than common violence, just as if it were tired, or angry, at having been kept back by her presence.

The more than patience, the undeniably deep interest with which I listened to all this, and a great deal more on the same theme—as, for instance, how the hapless Josephine had remained, just on the spot where we were seated, through the whole of one night, and was found fainting, exhausted, and in despair at the miraculous fruitlessness of her long watch, by the attendants, from whom she had contrived to escape on the preceding evening;—all this and much, much more, I listened to in a manner but little creditable to my wisdom, I am afraid, and giving very fair occasion to quote upon me—

"Conceit in weakest bodies strongest works."

In self-defence, however, I must just hint that I did not altogether believe in the miraculous and oracular nature of the fountain, (though I had every possible inclination to do so,) but without this, there was quite enough to

excite the fancy sufficiently to render the legend, with all its historical freshness, exceedingly captivating. And then, the peculiarity of the scene in which we listened to it; the solemn stillness of the lake, with its glorious frame of mountains, the half-seen towers of Hautecombe Abbey rising behind the trees, the picturesque grouping of the trees themselves, and, first in effect, though last in my catalogue, the mysterious-looking rock itself, with its dry, gaping aperture, and the empty reservoir before it, with the pebbles at its bottom, already white, and as free from every appearance of moisture as if no water had visited it since the last long-ago shower of rain! The scene, in short, was both beautiful and interesting in no common degree, and together with the piteous tale and plaintive voice of our historic guide, kept us, long after our repast was ended, very patiently still upon the stone bench beside the rock. But at length we remembered that there were other things to do, and other sights to see, and we civilly hinted as much to our guide, adding, that we had better submit, without further delay, to share the fate of the Empress Josephine, and bid adieu to the inhospitable fountain.

The man looked vexed again, laid his ear against the aperture in the rock, shook his head, looked at the sun, observed that it was late, and, pointing to the dry stones at the bottom of the empty pool, declared that it must have been so many hours since the water ran last, that it would be a great pity to go without waiting a little longer; for, as the poor empress was dead and gone, there was no danger of its ever being so very long again without running. So once more we began gazing at the lovely lake, at the historic Châtillon in one direction, and the still more historic Hautecombe in the other; at the Mont du Chat, and its savage-looking apex on this side, and the not much tamer outline of the Dent de Nivolet on the other; and thus another half-hour wore away.

During this time, our guide continued, about once in every five minutes, to jump down into the empty basin at the foot of the rock, and apply his ear to the aperture, which still, however, showed no drop of moisture to reward him. All this was done with so many gesticula-

tions, such clasping of his hands, and casting up his eyes in despair, that it suddenly occurred to me that the whole history of the intermittent fountain was an invention, fabricated for the purpose of giving the sojourners at Aix *une raison de plus* for hiring a boat for the day to cross the Lake de Bourget, for which, save for the accustomed picnicking beside the miraculous fountain, three or four hours might suffice. No sooner did this idea occur to me, than I communicated it with considerable indignation to my companion, and we both started up together, exclaiming that we would wait no longer. Our guide was at that moment with his indefatigable ear again glued to the rock; but, without uttering a word in reply to our somewhat stern announcement, he sprang from his station in the dry pool, and rushing towards us, seized me by the arm, and forcibly drew me to the verge of it.

"Je ne veux pas rester," said I, endeavouring to disengage my arm.

"Ecoutez!" said he, in a whisper, beckoning forward my companion with his finger.

He was instantly by my side, and then in sober truth, we heard the strangest and most unwonted sound imaginable. It certainly was the running of water; but distant and pent-up as it was, it sounded infinitely more like a hollow and very dismal groan. I really felt my heart beat as if some supernatural, or at any rate very marvellous operation were in process; but the moments of expectation were of short duration; the hollow sound I have described was speedily changed for what was unmistakably that of running water, and in an instant afterwards out rushed a column of water, so abundant as to fill the receiver with great rapidity. I felt greatly ashamed of the suspicions which I had entertained of the veracity of our poor guide, and the more so when I witnessed the delight with which he hailed the arrival of the stream, which seemed to prove that the previous anxiety he had displayed was not counterfeited. Certainly, it is one of the strangest phenomena I ever witnessed, and it has puzzled, I am told, rather wiser heads than mine. Our guide, all of whose statements I

feel particularly bound to believe, repeatedly assured us that neither the season of the year nor the state of the weather made any difference as to the length of time between the returns of the stream, nor in the quantity which poured forth. The quantity, he said, varied, though not very greatly, but never in accordance with the weather.

Of course, we remained on the spot till the mysterious stream had ceased to flow, and then walked back to the abbey, the state apartments in which, still kept in high order as the occasional religious retreat of the dowager-queen of Sardinia, we had not yet seen. The rooms are plainly, but handsomely furnished—most of them command fine views of the lake, and of the mountains which surround it; yet, nevertheless, I thought there was something singularly dull and dismal in their aspect. The solemn-looking dame, who did us the honour of displaying them to our view, informed us that her dowager-majesty had only left Hautecombe a few days before, having passed a fortnight there in the deepest retirement. This royal lady is, as I have stated above, to have the honour of being buried in the abbey, and is to be the last individual to whom this distinguished resting-place is to be accorded, the Sardinian crown being no longer in the line of Savoy princes, by whom the venerable shrine was founded above seven hundred years ago.

Our evening voyage across the lake in returning, showed us some beautiful varieties of effect from the glowing lights and long shadows produced by the setting sun. But despite these new beauties, our homeward voyage was not performed without some slight anxiety, for the boatmen described some fleecy, and as I should have thought, very innocent-looking clouds in the south-west, which they told us were the certain harbingers of a gale of wind. They then amused us with a series of anecdotes in the eclogue style, in which by alternate speeches of constantly *crescendo* eloquence and power, they gave us to understand that the seemingly tranquil water on which we were floating, notwithstanding its excelling beauty, and the soft *couleur de rose* that it reflected, was occasionally subject to very violent and

ungovernable fits of fury, during which many boats were overset, and lives now and then lost. They reminded each other also that we had reached the month of September; and then, after lowering their voices to a very sinister whisper, they set about taking down the awning, assuring us that we should be much safer without it. When this operation was completed, they reseated themselves with many injunctions to me not to be frightened, for that they should now be able to make more way with their oars, and whether impelled by real danger, or only the pleasure and possible advantage of talking of it, I know not, but certain it is that they now made their way across in vastly less time than it had taken us to go exactly the same distance in the morning.

By the time we reached the shore, however, though we perceived no symptom of storm on the lake, the sky was looking in all directions surly and cross, instead of bright and smiling, and there was wind enough to make the dust of the very dusty road to the town exceedingly disagreeable. This, and the many hours of rambling we had indulged in, made me again feel that the lake was much too far from Aix to permit its being such an endless and ceaseless source of enjoyment to the company there as it would be, were it as near as Derwent Water to Keswick, or Windermere to Ambleside. Whether the predicted gale arrived during the night I know not, having slept most profoundly till a very bright sun awakened me on the following morning, just in time to get ready for an early breakfast before setting off for the celebrated Lake of Annecy. Nearly the whole way from Aix-les-Bains to the town of Annecy, the road is interesting, either from the beauty of the scenery it commands or from the circumstances of its local history. But of all the traditions belonging to this region, so rich in old romance, the most recent is (contrary to custom) the one which seizes the most powerfully on the imagination and the feelings.

The beautiful Hortense de Beauharnais, ex-queen of Holland, passed some weeks of the summer of 1813 at Aix-les-Bains, with a small retinue of intimate and attached friends and adherents. The favourite amusement

of the party consisted in making daily excursions to many beautiful and interesting spots in the neighbourhood. On the morning of the 10th of June, Hortense declared her intention of visiting the Lake of Annecy, and passing an hour or two in sailing and rowing upon it. Her favourite attendant and friend, the young and lovely Baronne de Broc, besought her to change her project, and to devote the morning to Grezz, its venerably historic tower, and its wild and romantic cascade. "No, not to-day," was the reply; "to-day must be for Annecy;" and the party set off accordingly.

On reaching the point in the road from whence the rude path to the cascade of Grezz is visible, the Baronne de Broc renewed her entreaties that they might visit the cascade, if only to give it one short glance in passing, and her entreaties prevailed; the gentle-tempered queen was not proof against the pertinacity of her favourite—the carriages were ordered to stop, and the whole party descended, and pursued the short but rough path that leads to the cascade. The fall of water is but trifling, but there is something in the dark colour and wild formation of the rocks around it that is very striking, and the party stood delighted on the edge of the gulf, contemplating the scene. A grotesque-looking mill, so grotesque as not greatly to injure the wild character of the spot, stands on the very brink of the precipice, and the miller, as was his wont, scrupled not to leave his business within the building for the more profitable occupation of escorting the ladies who ventured to brave all the dangers of slippery paths, engulfing whirlpools, and over-hanging precipices, for the sake of enjoying the miniature horrors of this singular scene. But the Baronne de Broc sedulously avoided his assistance, as well as that offered by the gentlemen of the party. Her delight at having overcome the opposition of the queen is described as having been beyond measure great; she repeatedly clapped her hands, in triumphant glee, during the walk from the carriage to the cataract, and, on arriving, immediately separated herself from the rest of the party, in a sort of ecstasy of admiration that seemed to demand the freedom of solitude for its full indulgence.

There is one spot still pointed out, though the approach to it has now been so artificially arranged as nearly to destroy all vestige of what it is said to have been, from whence the cascade is seen to peculiar advantage, but it was then not to be reached without danger and difficulty. Towards this point, Madame de Broc was making her way alone, when she suddenly stopped, and throwing up her arms, exclaimed, "Dieu! que c'est beau!" and almost in the same instant her foot slipped, and she was precipitated into the frightful chasm below. The words above quoted were the last sounds she was heard to utter. Every possible effort was made to save her, but in vain. Her mutilated body was speedily brought to shore, but every symptom of life was extinct, not, as it appeared from drowning, but from the concussion against the rocks, occasioned by the turbulence of the whirlpool into which she fell. The agony of the poor queen is related to have been dreadful, and it is said to have been long before her health recovered from the shock. She immediately caused a monument to be erected on the spot, which, while it considerably interferes with the picturesque wildness of the scene, atones for it by the sad, but interesting recollections which it recalls. The inscription was dictated by the mourning queen herself. There is something pretty and touching in the argument used to enforce caution on the future visitors of the same perilous spot.

"Madame la Baronne de Broc, agée de 25 ans, a péri sous les yeux de son amie, le 10 Juin, 1813.

"O vous qui visitex ces lieux! n'avancez qu'avec précaution sur ces abîmes; *songez à ceux que vous aiment!*"

There was something so melancholy in the story, so dark and dreary-looking in the spot, and so exciting from the various ghostly details recorded by the man who was standing close beside the unfortunate Hortense at the moment her fearful shriek announced the catastrophe, and who still occupies the rude dwelling beside the cataract, that it required a mile or two of beautiful scenery to restore our spirits. But there is something in the aspect of Alby, where we stopped to enjoy an

hour's delicious ramble, well calculated to chase all sorts of disagreeable images from the mind. The wild ravine, through which the little river Chéran runs, the fine bridge over it, and the tumble-down old town itself, with its superb background of mountains, produce such a variety of lovely landscapes within the circuit of a single mile, that an artist might easily fill a huge portfolio without going beyond it.

From Alby to Annecy a succession of lovely scenes, charmingly diversified by bare and towering mountain-tops, pine-forests, with spots of the prettiest sylvan scenery interspersed, following each other with the most enchanting variety, amuse the eye till Annecy itself, with its busy but primitive-looking population, and its strikingly "Prout-like" bits of town landscape, becomes visible, and then a perfectly new set of ideas arise to occupy the mind. Here again, as at Chambéry, the memory of the unfortunate Rousseau comes full upon one. It was here that he first saw Madame de Warens, and repaid the shelter that her careless and promiscuous hospitality afforded him, not only with his whole heart—poor silly boy—but by the most abject subjection of the moral sense, and, in fact, of all healthful judgment upon every subject, that ever fell upon the youthful mind. There is but one way of deriving pleasure from thus contemplating the early scenes of this great writer's existence, and that is by tracing in the majestic natural features of the region, the source of that enthusiastic love for the beauties of nature, which inspired the finest bursts of feeling upon the subject that mortal man has ever found the power to express.

The whole of that evening and the following day was not too much to bestow upon Annecy and its glorious lake. Yet glorious is no fitting epithet for it, for the term seems to imply extent, noble from its vastness, and features grand, even perhaps to severity. Such a word might better befit the gigantic lakes of Erie or Ontario; and if so, it is indeed but little applicable to that of Annecy, for it would not, I think, be easy to find any scenes upon the earth's surface, in all respects more perfectly dissimilar. The American lakes are almost awful

in their vastness, and startling from their boisterous resemblance to the distant ocean; but I doubt if even the sturdy patriotism of a New Yorkist could ascribe any beauty to their murky waves, or to their tame shores either; whereas the lovely little lake of Savoy cannot be looked at in any direction without conveying to the mind a sense of beauty that will almost

"—— Take the 'prison'd soul,
And lap it in Elysium,"

as effectually as the song of "Circe with her syrens three." Nor is there a mountain-top, a crag, a ruined watch-tower, or scathed fragment of a mouldering wall, each and all becoming visible from side to side as your little bark glides on, which is not redolent of deep historic interest. Madame de Stael says, with her usual unfailing truth of observation, that no mere beauty of landscape can long atone to the mind for the absence of all record of those who have occupied the world before us. It is the frequent recurrence of such records which makes the travelling through Savoy so like passing, in body as well as in mind, through the scenes of an historical romance.

In countries possessed of greater facilities for manufactories and commerce, and where greater encouragement is given for the exercise of industry in all branches, this charm of course cannot exist in the same degree, and the more reasonable portion of mankind probably console themselves for the want of it by many philosophical, political, and statistical observations, all tending to prove that the "go-ahead" system is infinitely more profitable than the *statu-quo;* and desperately bold, most assuredly, would the lover of old walls and unmined mountains be who should seriously attempt to deny it. But, as the old song says,—

"For a' that, and for a' that,"

it is very delightful to wander through a land where little, save what may be easily traced as the slow, dignified, and venerable work of time, has been done to efface the features left by the human beings who looked out upon the

same scenes centuries and centuries ago. Luckily for the idle ones who love occasionally to dream through a summer month or two in this manner, there are never wanting, in some queer little bookseller's shop or other in the old towns of such a country as Savoy, a volume of legends, or of graver local history, and well-received tradition, which serve better than even Murray's matchless "Hand-books" themselves, as guides upon such an expedition. One of the first duties to which my companion addresses himself upon our arriving at any town from whence we mean to start upon an exploring ramble, is to enter some such shop or shops, and possess himself of one or more of the dusky, dusty, grey-papered little volumes which his inquiries are pretty sure to bring forth. At Chambéry we might have got a score or two of these venerable chronicles without difficulty, and though we did not increase our travelling library to this extent, we obtained more than one volume, half-truth, half-fable, in which graphic and familiar mention was made of all the castles, convents, towns, and villages of the region we desired to explore; and more than once it has happened to us, after reading in these half-romances of a "*beau sire*" who had set off upon an expedition that led through many perils, from stronghold to stronghold, in a direction where the scenery was tempting, and the ruins of a tower or a castle here and there, by way of guide-posts, were sure to be met with, that we have literally set off upon the route described.

I am not quite sure, however, that I can recommend this scheme with a safe conscience, as being the best mode of seeing the country; for although the whole of Savoy is full of interesting relics of the days that are gone, the progress from one town to another, even though the fragment of a tower or two having abundance of traditionary lore attached to them may be encountered *en route*, will not lead through scenes quite as romantic as those traversed by the "*beau sire*" aforesaid. Old chronicles say that the name of Savoy was formerly *Malevoie*, an appellation given to it on account of the danger of travelling through its wild roads; the mountain caves and the pine-forests near which they passed furnishing shelter to

innumerable bandits. But since the days of the magnanimous Berold, says the same authority, the country has been so much better ordered, that the banditti have disappeared, and the name *Sauvevoie* has been assumed instead. That this improved state of things is very devoutly to be hailed as a blessing, I certainly will not deny; but it is not the less certain that a broad, well-kept, high-road, is a less picturesque object than a wild ravine, and that the groups of hard-featured women, carrying their heavy weaver's beams, round which is wound the delicate tissue of silk for which Chambéry, Faverges, and various other towns in the neighbourhood are renowned, are by no means so startling and Salvator-like as those encountered when Sauvevoie was Malevoie.

But notwithstanding these discrepancies between the things that have been, and the things that are, our old books did us, as I have said, very excellent service, and lent a degree of interest to our exploring rambles, which most certainly they would not have possessed in anything like an equal degree without them. How, for instance, as we glided over the bright waters of Annecy, should we have discovered that the little town which displayed so much picturesque Christianity behind us, owed its *(soi-disant)* foundations to a colony from Egypt, and that its first adorations were offered to Apis? Or where should we have learned to treat with proper contempt the authors who have pretended to trace symptoms of Celtic origin in the crumbling ruins among which we so greatly delighted to wander? When, in fact, the mighty Gauls were the first who laid stone on stone in these regions, either for shelter or defence; whereas no traces of Celtic workmanship can be found, save in the caves and subterranean grottoes, which were their only abodes, which were afterwards used by the Gauls for the purpose of concealing their harvests, and traces of which may be found in various parts of Savoy at the present day. Nay, how should we ever have known that we ought to stop our bark opposite to the lovely park-like bit of scenery that nestles under the snow-capped majesty of Mount Tournette, and pass an hour in wandering about the Château de Menthon, the birth-place of the universally

venerated St. Bernard, who has been aptly enough styled the Apostle of the Alps?

This fact, however, I confess, is perhaps sufficiently notorious to have reached us without the assistance of our old books; but I doubt if we should ever have found out, had we unfortunately been without them, the very important circumstance, that the spotless genealogy of "Les Sires de Menthon," the founders of this historic edifice, is not only *absolument sans tache*, but of such high antiquity, that one among them has inscribed upon a marble tablet, which still exists, "*Ante Christum natum jam baronatus eram.*" Upon the same authority, however, I can undertake to say, that highly respectable, and indeed venerable, as this degree of antiquity may appear to us mushroom islanders, so many of whom are quite contented if we can trace our names and race up to the Norman conquest, it gives, in this land of old tradition, only a so-so sort of claim to the honour of long-traced descent, because, as we well knew, we judge of all things by comparison, and the "Sires de Sales" have taken for their historic *pourpris*, "*antiquam Abraham fieret ego sum*,"—which to us ignorant heretics, perhaps, may sound a little profane—but as the relics of a saint of this ancient race repose (together with those of the highly-esteemed friend, La Mère Chantal,) in the sanctuary of the cathedral of Annecy, it might seem like presumption to doubt its propriety.

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But I might fill a volume were I to enumerate all the enjoyment we found in our Savoy wanderings, or all the advantages we derived from the lore we picked up on the way.

One more Savoy Ramble.

"Once more unto the *heights*, dear friends,
Once more."

There is but one way, as I think, by which the traveller who loves to spin long yarns concerning the fondly-remembered journeys he has taken—there is but one way by which he can repay the debt of gratitude he lies under to those who are so obliging as to listen to him, and that is, by making the said long yarns serve as a clue to lead safely up hill, and down dale, the steps of all such kind listeners as may be tempted by his tale to arouse themselves, gird up their loins, and follow his wanderings through the scenes he has described. It would be scarcely fair, however, to expect that the conscientious traveller should keep his grateful project of remuneration so steadily in view as never to pause for a moment, as he spins his clue, in order to indulge in a little gossip, not quite essential perhaps to the well-doing of those who take him as a guide. In good truth, the temptation is too strong to be resisted; and it should be remembered that this very lingering over the scenes described, is so strong an indication of the pleasure which the mere recollection of them produces, that it may be safely received in evidence of their being worth the visiting.

Bear with me then, patiently, gentle listener, although it is again of Savoy, beautiful, wild, historic, strong-featured Savoy, that I am about to talk, and to exercise your patience. I can assure you that I intend to be very useful in my gossip, not only pointing out to you sundry things that you would do well to see, but cautioning you

against some others that you would do well to avoid, or if not exactly to avoid, at any rate to approach with caution. But before I come to these very useful particulars, let me utter a few more admonitory words of general remonstrance, to the multitude of travellers who leave home with the *idée fixé* of Rome in their heads, to a degree that seems to preclude the possibility of their receiving any other.

Truly, dear countrymen and countrywomen, it is a lamentable thing that you should suffer yourselves to be borne along over such a country as this of Savoy, without pausing for a month, a week, or even a day, to see what nature has done for it. It is no excuse for you that you have the eternal city in view, for as reasonably when you get there might you shut your eyes as you go over the bridge of St. Angelo, because you set off from your hotel for the purpose of seeing St. Peter's. Think better of it next time. There will be a next time—for how few there are who, having once taken courage to cross the stern barrier which divides the rest of the earth from its museum, its garden, its most venerable library, the tomb of its heroes, and the shrine of its saints,—how few of them wend their homeward way without promising to their hearts that they will come again? Next time, therefore, use more wisdom, look more deliberately about you, and take care to remember all I am now going to say to you.

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Of course, we did not leave Annecy without making the beautifully situated Château de Daing, or Daingt, an excuse for passing another delicious hour or two on its lake, the best manner of reaching it from Annecy being by a boat; but the château, save for its singularly beautiful position, is no longer so interesting to travellers as formerly. A few years ago, its beautiful apartments were let singly, if required, together with all the other accommodations of a regular *pension*, to any one whose taste, leading them to such a resting-place in this charming country for a few days, preferred the quiet retirement of such an abode to the certain noise and doubtful comforts

of an hotel. But this is no longer the case: the mansion and grounds have become the property of a gentleman who resides there with his family. I mention this in order to fulfil my promise of being useful, as it may save from disappointment those who, reading in the guide-books that the beautiful Château de Daing has been opened as a *pension*, might arrange their plans accordingly.

Annecy-le-vieux may be deemed worth climbing to by those who have time to spare, and who wish to look out upon the country from a tolerably elevated point of view; but it is to professed antiquaries only that I should point out this excursion as indispensable. From Annecy we proceeded in our pleasant, queer little carriage, to Faverges; and after one of those particularly clean and comfortable coffee-and-milk breakfasts which now and then occur on exploring expeditions, we walked up to its finely-placed castle. Horace Walpole warned me long ago, even in the days of my youth, against what he terms the "*issimo*" style of description; and questionless, the warning was a wholesome one; nevertheless, there are some things that it would be difficult to describe, save by the use of the superlative, and the view from the hill upon which the castle of Faverges stands is among them. As for the castle itself, it has greatly changed its character since it was the scene of knightly deeds and knightly splendour, having so greatly sunk in glory, and risen in utility, as to be converted from a warlike stronghold into a manufactory of silks and satins.

I had been reading, the evening before, some pages of Monsieur Ménabréa's interesting volumes, entitled "Les Alps Historiques"—(we do, now and then, get sight of a new book, as well as of our beloved old legends,) and had been much amused by his historic sketch of the gradual declension of feudal greatness and chivalric glory, and of the symptoms of both, which the dwellings of nobles built, or repaired, during the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries (castles though they were, "avec tours, fossés, pont-levis, créneaux, et machicoulis, vains simulaires d'une grandeur déchue") displayed. A step further towards our actual condition was made evident enough by inscriptions like the following, being conspicuously

placed on the mansion which Réné Favre built at Proméry, near Annecy :—

"Pain, Paix, Peu."

And again,—

"Il n'y a autre noblesse,
Que celle que vertu laisse."

Both these, as well as various others in the same spirit, were from the pen of Claude Mermet, whose volumes of "*poesies*" was published at Lyons in 1583. Another specimen is cited from the same hand, still more *modern* in its feeling :—

"Tu prétends estre gentil-homme
Par la faveur du parchemin :
Qu'un sot se trouve en ton chemin
Tu seras puis simplement homme."

This certainly shows an advanced "march of mind" for remote Savoy in the sixteenth century; and the old baronial castle of Faverges converted into a receptacle for silk-looms, looks as if the march had gone steadily on. Shall we live to see the stout old walls of Caernarvon, Chepstow, Ragland, or Goodrich, converted to similar purposes ? The effect of this metamorphosis on the mind is very striking. We had been told that we must not fail to mount to the castle of Faverges, for the purpose of looking at the magnificent view it commands; and we set off accordingly, despite a burning sun, to climb the steep height on which this nobly-placed edifice stands.

These mountain strongholds are so constantly placed on elevations difficult of access, that we have become perfectly well broken-in to the toil of mounting to them; and however varied we may find, on examination, such portions of the old fabrics as remain standing, the process of looking for, and finding, the principal features of all such structures has become as familiar to us as the preliminary act of climbing. And so strongly marked do we always discover the enduring features of strength and power to be in all of them, and so forcibly does every object on such spots set the imagination upon recalling the deeds of daring and of dread that have been enacted thereon, that it is almost impossible not to fall again and again into waking dreams of feudal tyranny and chivalric valour,

peopling the scene with warlike and picturesque figures of all sorts, and becoming every moment further and further removed in spirit from the very literally "working-day-world" propensities of the time present.

Such being the habitual state of mind of castle-ruin hunters, it is not very difficult to imagine the sort of contrast produced upon their senses by beholding, as they at length master the last steep turning of the ascent on which the castle of Faverges is situated, a tame quadrangle of white-washed walls, perforated with abundance of little square windows, with looms visible through the open casements, and busy figures flitting to and fro, bearing about them every imaginable mark of the manufacturing activity of the nineteenth century.

"Can this be the castle of Faverges?" said I, somewhat wearied by the long ascent, and at least half-angry at finding that it had only brought me to a dirty-looking workshop.

"Yes, truly," replied my companion, "it must be the old castle, though strangely metamorphosed." And on looking about a little, it was easy enough to trace some of the outworks, though not in a condition to redeem, in any degree, the undignified aspect of the umwhile fortress. Having finished this very unsatisfactory survey, I was preparing to follow the example of that King of France, who

> "Marched up the hill, and then marched down again;"

but my companion suggested that it might be as well to advance a few steps farther, as it was probable, from the form of the hill we had mounted, that we should by doing so command an extensive view. And these few steps farther did, indeed, give us such a landscape to look down upon, as speedily made me forget the want of "the quarry of old stones," amongst which I had expected to amuse myself;—wherefore I strongly advise all those who afford themselves, in travelling, sufficient time to look at what is worth seeing, to indulge in just such an hour of idleness as we enjoyed within the space of half a mile beyond the *ci-devant* castle of Faverges.

It surely is a merciful dispensation of Providence

which causes the difference between one human being and another, in the sensations produced by the sight of new and beautiful scenery. What a horde of wanderers would all the nations of the earth become, did everybody love the sight of new hills and valleys as I do! As to inns, hotels, caravansaries, and all such convenient inventions, they would become as much beyond the hope of the majority of ordinary mortals, as turtle-soup and venison-haunches surpass that of the guests of the table (*pas d'hôte*) of a union workhouse.

Inns and hotels! I doubt greatly if we should all find room enough to pitch our little canvas tents without finding ourselves occasionally such very near neighbours as to produce mutual inconvenience, by making the outpourings of our respective picturesque raptures overheard by each other. Providentially, however, as I said before, Nature, with her usual characteristic benignity, has taken care that no such inconvenient crowding upon her favourite spots shall take place. The diversity between man and man respecting their susceptibility to harmony of sound, the enjoyment where it is, and the suffering where it is not, is not more strongly marked than the inequality, both of pleasure and pain, produced by what is lovely, or otherwise, in objects which influence us solely through the medium of the eye.

I remember hearing a very clever man, and one whose keenly observant philosophy, when employed upon the moral phenomena of the world, has made a most justly popular writer—I well remember his saying to me, that few things occasioned him a sharper annoyance than the being called upon to sympathize with the lovers of fine scenery.

"In passing either up or down any of the famous rivers," said he (and he was a great traveller), "which are the favourite resort of steam-boats and hunters for the picturesque, I invariably ensconce myself in the cabin, and by devoting myself immovably either to reading or writing, continue to escape the horrible persecution of being asked every other minute, 'Is it not beautiful?'"

Yet this person was as far the reverse of dull as

Hyperion of a satyr. Let no one therefore—and trust me, all ye who kindle at a landscape, the advice is good—let no one, upon feeling his heart swell, and his spirit expand itself into an increased capability of happiness, at the sight of fine scenery, imagine that it is the result of superior intellectual organization. It is the result of no such thing, but simply and solely of that sort of justness of vision which detects harmony, or the want of it, both in the form and colour of everything it looks upon. And this species of perfection in the sense has no more claim to intellectual superiority than has the gift inherent in some mortals, greatly over "other some," of discerning the quality of whatever is submitted to the sense of taste. It may often, moreover, be remarked—at least my own observation leads me to think so—that where the organization of one sense is particularly perfect, that of the rest is very much so too. I have never known a painter who was not fond of music, or a musician who was not fond of painting; and I have known repeated instances in which both the one and the other have been applied to as the best amateur, and most unprejudiced authority, for the purpose of passing judgment upon the flavour of wines. I knew one painter, and a very clever one, who, being a great snuff-taker, most scrupulously kept one nostril undefiled from the approach of the "titillating dust," that he might not lose or impair his power of enjoyment in sweet odours.

But all this nicety of sense has nothing to do with intellect; *ergo*, a love of landscape may very modestly be spoken, nay, boasted of as a source of pleasure, without any assumption of intellectual superiority. When it does happen, however, that this fine material organization is united to superior intellectual capacity, the result is astoundingly brilliant. Listen to Milton when he employs his breathing thoughts and burning words in descriptions of the beauties or the harmonies either of nature or of art. But Milton was a scholar, and may be supposed to have found his wondrous mastery of expression in his learning. Let those who think so turn to Shakspeare, and they will find that an exalted intellect, *fitted up* with a fine organization, will do quite

as well with little or no learning (commonly so called) at all.

Such is the human animal, when exhibited to us without accident or unfavourable influence of any kind—and it is only the contemplation of such a specimen which can lessen the difficulty of comprehending the high station assigned him in creation; without this, one might sometimes be tempted to think, when looking a little curiously at the souls and bodies of those around us, that a place a *good deal* lower than the angels might do for them.—But this burst of thankfulness for the blessings accruing from so many human beings staying at home, and leaving the high-roads free for such as like better to go abroad, has carried me so far away from the beautiful bit of terrace ground behind the castle of Faverges, that I know not how to get back to it gracefully. There we lay, however, stretched at lazy length upon a grassy bank, looking down upon what seemed extent enough for half a world, wishing each other heartily joy of our wandering propensities, and sketching plans for future journeyings; and, notwithstanding my consciousness of the great advantages we enjoy from some people remaining at home, I am benevolent enough to hope that of those who *do* follow my rambling example, some few may find themselves either on that spot or some other near it equally beautiful, and rejoice in the fate which brought them there as heartily as we did.

Our next stage was to Ugine, as dirty and as ugly a little town as can well be imagined, but placed in the midst of scenery so very beautiful as to make one think that if it were possible to take lodgings for a week on the roof of one of the repulsive-looking houses, instead of within it, the scheme might answer. On the opposite side of the river Arly is the prosperous little town of Beaufort, the original cradle of the two noble races which have become native both to England and to France.

We reached the town formerly known as l'Hôpital, but now very absurdly, and, as it sounds to my ears, barbarously, re-named Albertsville, which, as far as a name can do it, gives a sort of transatlantic newness to a place which ought to be redolent of old historic reminis-

cences without end. It is becoming, however, a very busy and flourishing town, with clean-looking streets, good inns, and handsome houses. Nevertheless, we turned away from all those blessings (not, however, till after we had dined exceedingly well), and crossed the Arly to Conflans, the exquisitely picturesque crumbling old town, that still hangs, as it were, in fragments, upon the steep rocks on the left-hand side of the river. And here, again, is one of those cases in which the post-haste "go-ahead" class of travellers pass by, and lose for ever one of the finest scenes that the eye can look upon. I greatly doubt if the justly celebrated North Terrace at Heidelberg must not yield the palm of beauty to the platform behind the old castle at Conflans. From under the shelter of one or two magnificent old trees, that seem to have been nourished for ages by miracle, so lofty and so bare is the bold rock on which they stand—from under the shelter of these noble trees we looked down upon the junction of the Arly with the Isere, the broad, rich valley of the latter stretching away for many a mile in one direction—the smaller, narrower, ruder valley of the Doran in another—the town of l'Hôpital on the opposite bank, and the whole framed-in by majestic mountains, here clothed half-way up with forests of various foliage, there "horrent" with bristling crags, and awful by their tremendous precipices.

Again and again, and still again, did we slowly pace along the low wall which surrounds this glorious platform; and though it was a sad business to turn away and leave it, and that I pitied myself very much at the moment for the necessity which compelled me to it, I certainly pity those very greatly more who have never seen it at all; for it is quite a mistake that when you turn away from such spots as the terrace at Heidelberg, and the platform at Conflans, you lose them altogether. On the contrary, they are calculated to live upon the memory with a distinctness which enables you to recall them for ever.

Nothing could be much more strongly contrasted than the species of gratification to which we turned upon leaving the platform, and that which we had enjoyed

while on it. In the view from this last-named spot there is all the vigorous and eternal youth of everlasting nature, and the sensation it produces is a sort of triumphant gladness at being permitted to live and look upon it; but passing under the arch which leads from the old fortress to the town, you come upon the most complete epitome of human labour in decay that the eye can look upon. I was almost tempted to believe, as I looked at the crumbling walls, the sinking arches, the unspeakable air of desolation that pervaded every part of this rapidly perishing old stronghold, and its picturesque dependencies, that it had all been left without any effort at repair, from the day that it so reluctantly yielded to the battering of Francis the First, to the present hour.

And, were we told that such was the fact, its condition would be easily understood, and little wonder, if any, excited by its not being in a still worse condition. But there *is* cause to wonder now. Why is it that, with a flourishing, young-looking town at the distance of half a mile, where the appearance of active industry is so remarkable as to render it impossible to doubt the certainty of finding employment there—why is it that, with this refuge before their eyes, the population of Conflans, amounting to above a thousand souls, still continues in dirt, in poverty, in ruin, and in wretchedness so evident and so revolting? Yet in spite of all this melancholy desolation, in spite even of the dirt and the squalid wretchedness which meet the eye in every direction, there is a strange, mysterious charm about the old place which made us linger in it almost as unaccountably as the inhabitants themselves.

Never can I forget the aspect of the old church, or the circumstances which attended our entrance into it! The light was already failing when we reached the door, but we were neither of us disposed to pass the dingy, tattered curtain which hung over it without lifting it up, and accordingly we did lift it up and walk in. The atmosphere was dim and dark, and that indescribable odour of mildew pervaded it, which seems to threaten health, even while it suggests such enticing thoughts of picturesque desolation as to render retreat

impossible. So on we went; and the next sensation we felt was considerably more alarming, and without any agreeable attraction at all; for the floor, which was of wood, creaked, cracked, and positively seemed giving way under our feet. Yet on we went still, for, dimly visible in the distance, was a dark object, which there was not light enough to enable us to make out, but which we declared to each other we must examine before we returned again to the sweet fresh air without.

So on we went, and came at last close, oh! very close to the object which had excited our curiosity, and then, notwithstanding the thickening gloom, we perceived with quite sufficient plainness that it was a coffin. It was of very decent blackness, but perfectly without decoration of any kind, and we perceived as we gazed at it that the lid, for the gratification either of affection or curiosity, was laid loosely on it, and might be removed at pleasure. It seemed not, however, to be our pleasure to remove it, for we both gazed on the narrow aperture left at the head without making any effort to increase it. *What* it was I felt at that moment I am really and sincerely unable to say. I do not, however, quite think that I expected the loose lid of the coffin to remove itself and startle me by the exhibition of the corpse beneath. Neither do I feel called upon to confess that I conceived there was any chance that the spirit of the departed would appear to chide us for our bold and somewhat irreverent approach to the relics he had so recently bequeathed to earth. But to speak honestly, telling the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, I did not by any means feel comfortable. So I made a sort of stumbling step backwards, and then I fancied that I felt the floor decidedly giving way; and really, considering the condition of the planks of which it was formed, and the apparent weight of the coffin, the idea was by no means very preposterous; a fact which I recall and record with some satisfaction, inasmuch as it may help to explain the irregular pulsation of the heart, of which I confess I was conscious, without leaving me quite bare to the imputation of having been afraid of a ghost. There is much comfort in this.

On leaving this musty, mouldering, dark, dank, and most dismal edifice, we asked a miserable-looking old man, in a sort of ecclesiastical but most particularly nasty garment, whom we encountered on the steps, whose body it was that was lying before the altar. "That of the priest of the parish," he replied. "He died yesterday, and will be buried to-morrow."

How deliciously sweet did the fresh air feel and smell! and how gaily did it seem to move and play around us as we turned away from this abode of death and desolation, in order to cross the pretty bridge over the Arly, which looked, with its air of steady usefulness, like a quiet friend stretching out a hand to lead us back again to light and life, and our very comfortable hotel in the unromantic but life-like town of Albertsville. Yet, nevertheless, when we had got half across this friendly bridge, we could not advance a step farther till we had indulged for a few minutes in the contemplation of the beautiful twilight landscapes, up the stream and down the stream, which it commanded. Why should Lord Byron, when speaking of a lovely country, call its beauty a "fatal gift?" How can that gift be fatal which causes pleasure as pure as it is intense? It is surely quite a poetic illusion to fancy that any country ever became "the plunderer's common prey" on account of its picturesque scenery; and therefore I hold such gracious combinations of rock and forest, mountain and valley, bright herbage and running streams, as we gazed upon from this bridge over the Arly, as a very blessed gift indeed. Thankful am I for my share of it! I would not lose my memory of all the objects I looked upon during the evening of that bright 18th of September, 1843, notwithstanding its ghostly interlude, for more than I will say.

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I did not dream of the coffined priest of Conflans, but slept as soundly as those ought to sleep who intend to get up at five o'clock in the morning, and to start off again before breakfast in search of "fresh fields and pastures new." And at five o'clock we did get up, with the habitual punctuality which has so often enabled me and mine to

go farther and see more within a given space of time than most people. I believe I have boasted rather often of this wakeful virtue already, but I do it without scruple; first, because it is not one of those magnificent virtues which require for its production any of the mental qualities which it looks like vanity to claim; and secondly, because, as a traveller, addressing travellers, I feel that it would be impossible to recommend any habit of equally important utility. Punctually then did we set off at five o'clock, intending to breakfast at St. Pierre d'Albigny, and afterwards to visit the ruined castle of Miolans,—to see which was, in truth, the principal object of the day, it being, both in an historical and picturesque point of view, one of the most remarkable objects in Savoy.

My English stay-at-home friends perhaps may be apt to think that five o'clock in the morning on the 19th of September, must have been a moment more chilly than cheering for setting off upon an expedition in an open carriage. But they must permit me to tell them that they are altogether mistaken. Though Savoy has been called the twin-sister of Switzerland, she is nevertheless first cousin to Italy; and anything more delicious than the sweet fresh breath of her mountains at the splendid moment when the glorious sun of the south has climbed high enough to give them his first warm smile, it is beyond my power to imagine.

No fog, no mist, no unfriendly exhalation of any kind, made us repent our having exchanged our beds for the high-road. But what a high-road it is! Now close beside the river, now high above it. At one moment "elevated, rapt," by catching a glance of some bare towering crag, that one feels certain must be the home of eagles; and the next enchanted by the sight of vineyards, and bleating flocks and lowing herds, and everything else that can suggest ideas of rural ease and plenty. It is, in truth, a most lovely land; and had it not the "fatal gift" of lying on the high-road to Italy, and being therefore considered merely as so much envious intervening space which all travellers of taste ought to gallop over as rapidly as possible, it would long ago have been as much celebrated as its neighbours.

An hour or two of this bright exhilarating progress brought us to a spot at which our driver stopped; and, pointing with his whip to a towering rock to the right, still, however, at a considerable distance before us, but conspicuous from its elevation of nearly a thousand feet above the river, he said, "There stands the castle of Miolans." I have an inveterate habit, which is often, certainly, a very silly one, of wanting to get out of the carriage and walk, the moment some particularly interesting object comes in sight; overlooking the very important fact, that in nine cases out of ten the desired object would be much more quickly reached by my sitting still. However, upon this occasion it certainly seemed to be a matter of doubt whether we really should not be doing well to leave the carriage and take an exquisitely inviting upward path, which the man told us, and told us truly, was the *shortest* road to Miolans, which moreover could not, he said, be reached in any direction by the carriage. The chief objection to our making the excursion from this point, instead of from St. Pierre d'Albigny, was the delay of our breakfast, a part of the day's duty for which our three or four hours' drive had already prepared us very effectually.

But there were three reasons which, fasting though we were, decided us upon enduring this delay. The first was, that it would enable the driver to bespeak the repast, and to have a room comfortably prepared for us. The second, that the town of St. Pierre d'Albigny was at a much greater distance from the castle than the point at which we had stopped; and the third, that the labour of the ascent would be greatly more fatiguing when the sun was higher than at present. This last consideration decided the question; for, although it was certain that we should have to traverse the distance from the ruin to the town in either case, it was evident that it would be a much easier business to descend from the rock at nine o'clock, than ascend to it at eleven, and so we sent off the carriage, and began mounting the steep path that pointed direct to the iron-looking fortress we wished to reach. The *steep path!* Oh what a gentle phrase is here for the well nigh perpendicular acclivity which rose before us. There is a proverb, a Latin one if I mistake not, which

says that a pleasant companion on a journey does very well in the place of a carriage. But if this be ever true in the case of a lady, *not young*, I am strongly of opinion that it cannot be so in mounting a path as nearly perpendicular as that which led us to the castle of Miolans, and that too before breakfast: for that *my* companion during the expedition I am describing was

All that *aged mothers* fancy when they love,

I am perfectly prepared to testify: nevertheless, I am fain to confess that I should have been exceedingly well pleased to have been conveyed to the top by means of other limbs than my own. Not, however, that anything in the shape of a carriage could have been dragged up it; but a donkey or a mule would have been a blessing past all price. I am a tolerably good walker too, and very rarely complain of the steepness of an ascent, being for the most part quite willing to pay the tax of moderate fatigue for the *belvédére* which is its usual reward. But in this case our treacherous coachman, in order to avoid the having to take our carriage up the practicable road leading from the town of d'Albigny to the castle of Miolans, had recommended to us a track little fitted for anything less agile than a mountain goat. The rock on which the fortress is built is itself a wonder, jutting boldly forth as it does from the mountain side, and it cannot fail of producing feelings of admiration for the bold man who had the courage to fix upon such a spot for the construction of his stronghold, and the perseverance to convey materials to such an eagle's nest to complete it.

Such being the position of this once celebrated state prison, to which a practicable road must have been originally made from the neighbouring town with considerable labour and difficulty—such being the nature of its position, let any one imagine what sort of work it must be to get up to it by means of a short zig-zag cut very nearly up the front of the cliff! This feat I had to perform before breakfast, and on a morning, too, already beginning to be "pretty considerably" hot; so that I certainly remember my approach to this renowned state prison

with no great wish to reach it again in the same way. I consider it as a matter of conscience to describe this wild and beautiful path faithfully, because the entrance upon it is of a very beguiling character, looking gently upward, with a tree or two arching it over very charmingly for a yard or two, and altogether tempting the unwary wanderer to leave the unpicturesque comfort of a carriage for a heavenward ramble, which will cost him, however, many "winded suspirations of forced breath" ere he reaches the end of it.

But having thus honourably and conscientiously performed my duty as a guide, and said quite enough to prevent the footsteps of dainty and delicate travellers from entering upon an enterprise which would be likely enough to prove anything but agreeable to them, the same spirit of truth induces me to encourage those who are stout and stalwart, and light of foot withal, to pay no attention whatever to any word I have said against this said short cut to the castle of Miolans, for to all such it would prove delightful from the first step to the last. Even to me, fasting and fagged as I was, I never paused to take breath without being ready to acknowledge that the magnificent landscape, growing wider and wider at every step we took, was enough to repay a greater labour. At last we reached the bit of table land on which the fortress stands, and to this, by some means or other, I do most strongly advise all manner of persons to attain, who have eyes formed after the fashion alluded to some pages ago—that is to say, eyes gifted with the (not universal) power of knowing what is beautiful when they see it.

It is easy enough to account for the delight such eyes convey to their possessors on beholding a fine landscape, but whence arises that delight, if possible, more pungent still, produced by gazing on the iron strength of the dark towers of Miolans, so sternly gloomy, so universally desolate, so fearfully eloquent, even in decay—of hopeless suffering, and of violence beyond the reach of witness or control? I could easily enough fancy the spirit of Blue Beard, or of a thorough-bred ogre, thrown into a perfect ecstasy of delight at sight of those enormous towers, reared on the very edge of the unscaleable rock, so aptly

formed to sustain them, each one large enough to contain a hundred wives, dead or alive, or a larder of a thousand innocents, while every feature, from the dungeon keep to the portcullis, seems to speak alike of strength and of concealment.

But why such peaceably-minded individuals as my companion and myself should look upon this stern, dark object, with such exceeding satisfaction, I am a good deal at a loss to comprehend. Yet so it was. We sat down upon a beautiful morsel of soft turf, as green as if it had been growing upon the Emerald Isle instead of upon a rock in Savoy; and stranger still, we sat too under the shelter of a chestnut tree, as rich and flourishing as if it had been born and bred in Spain; and there I truly believe that we both of us as completely forgot that we had not breakfasted as if the vulgar necessities of eating and drinking made no part of our sublime natures. There we sat, and confessed to each other that the most glorious palace in the world, with all the grace of architecture, and all the splendour of royal occupation, would fail to delight us as we were then delighted by those black, mouldering walls. The background against which they reared themselves was indeed as bright a field of heaven's own blue as ever was seen by an untravelled tramontane, and the rich expanse which seemed to stretch with a servile submission at its feet, as if bringing its subject treasures as an offering to its indomitable strength, was most marvellously fair to look upon.

Yet it was not from all this beauty that it derived its charm. On the contrary, we should probably have been more enraptured still had the rock on which the splendid ruin stood overhung a raging ocean, or a cataract as horrifically grand as Niagara. I cannot remember, among all the multitude of ruins which I have visited, any collections of walls, arches, and buttresses in which there exists such various materials for existing feelings of, not exactly terror, but a poetic approach to it, as the castle of Miolans. Yet it is probable that the strange effect I am attempting to describe was more the result of a foolish adventure which befel us there, than of the more usual aspect of the place; although no one, I presume, would

venture to deny that the colour, form, and position of this portentous-looking mass of stones have, when seen under the most ordinary circumstances, an air of gloomy severity, which cannot be contemplated with indifference. This adventure was, as I have said, a foolish one, and if I recount it for the use and benefit of scramblers and climbers in general, and for those in particular who happen to visit the castle of Miolans, it ought to be received as a very magnanimous proof of benevolence.

After having sat on the green sward long enough to recover from the heat and fatigue of the ascent, we entered one of a nest of little cottages which seem to have grown up, it is difficult to guess how or why, behind the ruined fortress, and inquired of a woman whom we found there, if we could be admitted into the interior of the ruin, the unassisted access to which was prevented by an enormous gate of solid oak. The reply was more civil than satisfactory, as it informed us that we should be perfectly welcome to go in, but that her husband, who always kept the keys of the castle, was gone to the fair at Albigny, and that, till he returned, all access to it was impossible. She added, that we should be sure to see him back in about a couple of hours or so, and might sit down, if we pleased, during the interval.

Now before our embarrassment at hearing this could be justly appreciated, it would be necessary to comprehend both the vehemence of our wishes for breakfast, and likewise for seeing the interior of the ruin; both of which sensations, being in intensity considerably beyond the ordinary average of human emotions, cannot by any means be easily described. As to sitting down in the good woman's hot little cottage, that was not a part of the business likely to trouble us, as our thanks for the offer were easily returned; and, without uttering any definitive decision about waiting, or not waiting, we moved off towards the ruin, to find out how far we could go, and how much we could see without the assistance of the keys. It was impossible to have devised any project *less* likely to set our troubled spirits to rest, and prepare us for walking contentedly down the long gradual descent which led to Albigny and breakfast. Anything more

provocative to curiosity than the peeps we got by clambering up to loopholes, and applying our longing eyes to the huge keyhole of the gates, cannot well be imagined.

The most remarkable feature of this fine old building is the boldness with which the mighty towers which flank the side that fronts the valley, rise from the very extremest edge of the perpendicular rock. It is impossible to imagine a site more daring or more picturesque, and our peeping showed us exactly enough of this to convince us that it would be a very heart-breaking business indeed to depart without seeing more of it. But like all other keys used to lock up particular portions of ruined castles, those which were now jingling in the dissipated warder's pocket, through the fair at Albigny, were absolutely necessary for our admittance to the point which we were exactly most anxious to reach. My companion left me for a few moments in order to examine the crumbling walls in all directions, not without hope that their falling condition might at some point or other defy the necessity of keys, and thus give us the power of penetrating to the inner court by only paying the penalty of a scramble. In short space he returned.

"I think," said he, "that I could manage to get in without much difficulty, and so might you too, if you would trust to me, and not take fright lest I should let go your hand, and so suffer you to tumble over the precipice."

The truth is, and that my companion well knew, that the particular mode of destruction arising from falling over a precipice is the one, *par excellence*, for which I feel the least predilection, and for an extremely good reason—namely, that, like cowardice, it makes one die many deaths instead of one, by means of the horrible vertigo which the mere sight of the danger is sure to occasion.

"I am quite willing to trust you," I replied, "and I cannot imagine there can be any danger of falling over the precipice, inasmuch as we cannot even see it before we are actually in the interior court."

"There certainly is no danger," said he, "if you will trust to me, and not think about the precipice. Come

with me, and I will show you a place where we can easily get in."

I followed him accordingly, and after a few twistings and turnings among the old walls we reached a spot at the further side of the building from that by which we had approached it, and found it looking more like a rich meadow than a bare rock, with good herbage, and abundance of fine chestnut trees. We stood here, on the verge of a steep hill, and looked down from it on the distant valley below; nevertheless, there was nothing in the least degree approaching a precipice, for the majestic crag on which the castle stands is most singularly isolated, and looks as if it had been flung out from the grassy hill's side by the action of a volcano. I looked down very complacently over the sunny slope, and sagely observed, that although it was very steep, I did not consider walking on the edge of it as at all dangerous; which pithy remark was elicited by my perceiving that, having reached this edge, my companion was leading me back again along its extreme verge, though wherefore I knew not, for the stern black wall of one of the towers reared its impenetrable surface before us, pierced by no visible ingress of any sort, save a window high above our heads.

"There is nothing very terrible," I repeated, "here; but how are we to get on? There does not appear to me to be a single inch to stand upon beyond the walls of this gigantic tower."

"Wait a moment," was the reply, and on we went to within a foot or two of the building. "Now, then, observe," said my companion; "it is evident that many a step has passed this way; do you not perceive three regular steps? These will take us in perfect safety to a breach by which we can enter as easily as by the great gates."

And as he spoke, he performed the feat he proposed, disappearing for an instant, and returning again immediately. It is by no means easy to describe the spot so as to render the proposed manœuvre intelligible; but the most important feature in it to my eyes, was a good thick bush of furzebrake or underwood, which effectually masked the horror of the precipice at the point where the

footsteps were visible; and, well knowing the trustworthy arm I had to assist me, I boldly stepped forward, and in another moment, by the help of the said arm in making one somewhat steep upward step, I found myself precisely on the spot where we wished to be.

I will not now pause to describe any of the gratification which ensued from looking down from various "points of vantage," attained with no great difficulty or danger, upon the noble landscape below us; but proceed to tell what our condition was, when, this pleasure having been enjoyed, was past and over.

"Now, then!" said I, having looked about sufficiently to assure myself that I had left nothing very remarkable unseen,—"now then, let us get out again, and gallop down the hill as fast as we can to breakfast."

And, arm in arm, we approached the place by which we had entered; but—

"Oh! the heavy change!"

—not indeed that in reality any change had taken place in the locality, for to the best of my knowledge and belief we had not displaced a single pebble by our entrance; nevertheless, the difference seemed to me as great as that between looking down an easy staircase, with every broad step carpeted, and inviting you to use it, and looking down the space occupied by the said commodious staircase, every step thereof being maliciously removed! But here again description fails me, and I can only say it was so, without being able to convey in words such a picture of the ground as to make this change conceivable. The most important describable point of difference was the absence of the bush which had been immediately before me when I had to make the first downward step. This may be understood by those who share my unhappy propensity to vertigo, but will, I suspect, be perfectly unintelligible to those who do not. It was, however, quite sufficient to make the operation of returning by the same way we came, a matter of total and complete impossibility to me. It was in vain that my stronger-headed companion pointed out to me the undeniable fact that the same morsel of level earth which had supported

my feet as I came up, might support my feet as I came down. This was a point which I did not attempt to dispute with him; nevertheless it was utterly beyond my power to profit by the conviction he enforced, and in truth he knew my infirmity too well to urge me very strongly, confessing that the first downward step which it was now necessary to take, in order to escape from this awful stronghold, *did* certainly require a firm foot and steady hand to perform it safely; and I had the great comfort of perceiving that he had evidently no inclination to attempt the adventure, unless it were entered upon with free will and unflinching courage on my part. But the perceiving this was pretty nearly my *only* comfort, for anything more utterly helpless and forlorn than our situation can hardly be imagined. What was to be done next?

"Let us," said I, "go round the walls, and carefully examine every part of them; perhaps we may find some point at which it might be possible for me to climb over them."

"You forget their height on the other side," he replied. "So much rubbish from the ruins of the interior have fallen here, that it is likely enough we might find many points at which you might reach the top of the wall on this side—the difficulty will be, how to get down on the other."

"But let us at least examine every part of the enclosure," said I. And we set off accordingly, pausing at every spot that offered the slightest hope of affording a practicable exit, but finding ourselves obliged to abandon all in succession, from observing that however possible it might be to get up, it would be by far too desperate an undertaking to attempt getting down. Alas! how little did we then care for all the curious architectural intricacies that our minute examinations brought to view! Neither traces of little staircases in the thickness of the wall, nor the low-browed arches now filled up with rubbish, which, questionless, once led to awful dungeons; no, nor even the stumbling over the weed-covered, rusty ring of an unmistakable trap-door, could move us farther. Considerably lowered in strength both by fatigue and

fasting, I felt what is commonly called nervous—which means, that all my ordinary courage and power of exertion seemed perfectly gone; and I was so completely "a coward in my own esteem," that I felt before our search was ended as if it would be infinitely better to lie down and go to sleep, than give myself any farther trouble in seeking the means of either creeping or climbing out of the prison I had so unwisely got into.

Just as I had reached this very deplorable epoch in my existence, and while, heavily hanging on my companion's arm, I was dragging my weary, hopeless steps towards a dark angle of the building which we had not yet explored, we suddenly came upon a human being whom we seemed to startle quite as much as he startled us. This odd-looking fellow-creature, whose presence, notwithstanding his very peculiar ugliness, we should have gladly welcomed if he would have let us, was a most ungainly-looking boy or dwarf, I really know not which, who, if the former, might from his size be about twelve or thirteen years of age. His occupation, considering the spot on which we found him, was queer enough. He was seated on the ground in a dark, dank corner of the ruin, with a villanously dirty fragment of linen upon his knees, into which he was counting what seemed to be a pretty large collection of copper and small silver coins. I certainly started on seeing him; for the apparition was equally ugly and unexpected, becoming visible to us as we turned round the projecting corner of a tower; but my start was nothing in comparison to his.

I shall not easily forget the look of dismay which took possession of his hideous features as he caught sight of us; but he was upon his legs in a moment, and darting round another corner of the old walls, was out of sight with a degree of rapidity that seemed to me rather spirit-like and alarming. My companion, however, darted after him, hallooing to him lustily to stop, but it was all in vain. He was gone, vanished either into thin air or thick stone, for nothing else remained visible to our eyes, neither could we discern any possible means by which he could have made his exit. There was too

much of disagreeable reality, however, in the dilemma in which we found ourselves, to leave us any imagination to dream of sprites and hobgoblins; and having, by the departure of this extraordinary-looking personage, lost the hope of escape which his appearance within the walls of our prison had inspired, it occurred to us both at the same moment that we must find it again in the fact that *he* had certainly found means to get out, and therefore that we might do so likewise.

"Where he is gone, we can follow," I exclaimed.

"I should hope so," replied my companion, "for sure am I that he has not climbed over the walls; he could not have done so without our seeing him."

This inference, from the position of the ground on which we stood, seemed very clear; for the fugitive must have crossed an open space in some direction to have reached them. But what then had become of him? Nothing less than the accomplished science of the nineteenth century could have inspired the confidence we felt of his not being formed of less solid materials than flesh and blood. But as it was, this confidence was enough to make us deem it worth while to examine every crack and cranny of the massive barrier which enclosed us, in the hope of finding some neglected breach in it which might serve our purpose.

"Sit you down here," said my companion, pointing to a fallen stone, conveniently backed by a fragment of masonry, which sheltered it from the brilliant sunshine, "sit you here, and let me have a hunt."

This interval of rest was extremely welcome to me, and my patience under the delay that followed was by no means exhausted, when my fellow-prisoner returned to me. The moment I saw his face I was convinced that he had been successful, and in a manner from which he had evidently found amusement as well as release, for he was laughing. The adventure, nevertheless, did not appear to have ended altogether without danger, for he had his handkerchief wrapped about his hand, as it might have been had he received a sabre-cut thereon. His countenance, however, prevented any serious alarm.

"It is all right now," said he. "I made rather a

hasty plunge into some brambles, and have got scratched a little, but I have broken a very respectable-looking sally-port through them now, so you have nothing to fear."

That I lost no time in following him may be easily believed; and, having scrambled over a little rough ground, covered with fragments of masonry and rank weeds, I found myself in front of what appeared to me the very highest and most inaccessible wall of the whole enclosure. I looked up at it with dismay.

"You must look down, and not up," said my guide: and thus instructed, I did look down, but perceived nothing but an extremely thickly-tangled mass of brambles, which rose to the height of five or six feet against the wall.

"But I see no sally-port," said I.

"Patience," he replied; and, taking my hand while he twisted round the corner of the bush, he placed me on the top of three or four very dilapidated steps, that appeared to terminate in a low arch, by no means inviting in appearance; for, whatever was beyond it, though not in total darkness, was too obscure to be fairly judged of as a place of refuge. The top of the steps was still a good deal encumbered and partially concealed by brambles, but they had been sufficiently removed to leave a practicable exit.

"But where does that dark arch lead to?" said I.

"To breakfast," was the prompt reply: and on hearing it, I felt that neither darkness, nor dust, nor thickets, nor thorns, could stop me; and boldly making the first downward plunge I presently found myself in what must once have been a reservoir for water, but it was now perfectly dry; and scrambling up again on the opposite side of it, we perceived that we were still within the original enclosure of the castle, though happily beyond the barrier intended to be kept sacred by the keys of the great gates. And, truth to say, no very heavy charge of carelessness lies against the guardian who, as it seems, so carefully keeps these keys in his pocket; for neither the entrance nor the exit which we had discovered for ourselves were of a nature sufficiently tempting to endanger his losing

many sous by neglecting them. As to the exit, indeed, I think it must require necessity as sharp as our own to lead either to its discovery or its use; and as to the entrance, I would assuredly recommend it to no one, young or old, male or female, who is not conscious of a head and a foot as steady and as firm as those of a chamois hunter.

As to the dirty little miser, to whom we probably owed the discovery of the friendly cistern, we saw him twice afterwards, once on the road, and once in the fair, through which we subsequently passed in the carriage. Whether his riches had been accumulated by begging, stealing, or the long and careful hoarding of the wages of his youthful labour, we had no means of deciding, but of the three, the last seemed to us by much the least probable.

And did we not trot briskly and merrily down the beautiful though somewhat long road which led to St. Pierre d'Albigny? and did not the increased enjoyment both of rest and refreshment atone for the want of both? and is there any pleasure that can be enjoyed *au mieux* without previous privation? The moral of my tale is therefore twofold: first, never get into a prison if you can help it, without knowing how you can get out; secondly, never grumble at a long walk before breakfast when you are quite sure of getting good coffee and rolls at the end of it.

* * * * * *

The whole drive from St. Pierre d'Albigny to Chambéry, which occupied the latter part of this varied day, is most superb. We passed immediately under that tremendous Mont Grenier, a portion of which, in the thirteenth century, fell and destroyed a town and sixteen villages. The part of the rock from which this awful mass was precipitated may still be distinguished.

The Story of a Shawl.

It is now several years ago that a friend of mine, who knew my propensity to story-telling, recounted to me an anecdote, which he assured me was related to him as a fact, and in such a manner as to lead him fully to believe that it was so. Since that time I have visited the locality where the circumstance is said to have occurred, and when I say that this locality is Venice, the reader will understand how it has happened that what slept in my memory before, has awakened now. The principal incident of the tale shall be faithfully given as I received it; but some minor circumstances I shall take the liberty to alter.

"L'histoire précise," says a modern French poet, "tue le fleur de l'emotion"—which morsel of sublimity I quote, in order to excuse my want of scrupulous exactness.

It is now, I believe, a good many years ago, that an English minister from the court of the King of England to that of the Doge of Venice, being unfortunately a widower, invited his sister to accompany him on his mission, and to take upon herself the management of his household, in his remote but splendid home. No proposal could have been better timed, or more agreeable; for the lady had also been deprived by death of her wedded partner, and being left with a daughter, and very little means of providing for her, could not but feel that the invitation was to be gratefully accepted.

By all accounts, Mrs. de Courtenay—such was the name of Lord Pentegrot's sister—had other motives, besides her wish of providing for her daughter, which made the offered position in his excellency's household

peculiarly agreeable. She was herself still young enough to be extremely lovely—an advantage which few women ever valued more, and which none could study more diligently to preserve. To do this effectually, or in fact to any good purpose, was totally beyond her power, in her dull little mansion in Somersetshire; but all the capabilities offered by a splendid diplomatic position at Venice rushed upon her imagination at once, as she read the welcome letter of her brother, and her only difficulty in replying to it consisted in the necessity of not expressing all the rapture she felt, lest the ambassadorial dignity of the Lord Pentegrot might take alarm, from the too sincere expression of her feelings. But she escaped this danger admirably; and her acceptance was conveyed in such a style, that his lordship considered himself as especially fortunate in having such a sister to accompany him.

In making this proposal, Lord Pentegrot was quite aware that he was taking upon himself a rather expensive charge; for he knew that the paltry little jointure of his sister would by no means suffice to supply both her and her daughter, (already fifteen years of age,) with what would be absolutely necessary for their suitable appearance among the ever splendid diplomatic corps of Europe. But, in the first place, he had no child himself, and he therefore thought that, although by no means rich, he might venture to hazard the undertaking, especially as he should always have the power to regulate the personal expenses of the two ladies according to his own will and pleasure; and, in the next, his young niece Clara was, next to himself, the thing he liked best in the world, and therefore the having her always near him appeared worth all the ducats he proposed to expend upon her.

The Lord Pentegrot's arrival at the palace prepared for him at one of the noblest points of the grand canal, was altogether in very good style. No man loved pomp and magnificence better than the Lord Pentegrot, and he was happy in a vocation which enabled him to indulge in this, chiefly at the expense either of the nation who sent, or the nation who received him.

Venice was at that time in all her glory, and the

capacious lungs of the Lord Pentegrot seemed to expand themselves with more than usual vigour, as he walked, followed by his sister and his niece, through the eight superb state-rooms which the gorgeous Republic had ordered to be prepared for him. He was a proud man before he reached his palace at Venice, but he was a prouder one still afterwards; and he would have considered it as a crime, partaking of the nature of suicide, had he permitted any motives of economy to interfere with the display of the magnificence with which he felt himself identified. And so the fêtes given by the Lord Pentegrot and his beautiful sister were among the most splendid in Venice; and there was no mansion for the *entrée* to which more intrigues were set on foot, by those who did not command the *entrée* by right.

Lord Pentegrot was proud of his sister, and well he might be, for not the noblest lady in Venice had more beauty to display, or better knew how to set that beauty off to advantage. It is true—alas! it was too true for Mrs. de Courtenay's peace of mind—that many ladies were more gorgeously attired; but as yet she had managed admirably well, by means of displaying in succession the half dozen rich and stately dresses with which her brother had presented her, as a suitable outfit upon her leaving England.

These were all admirably well chosen; for the beautiful woman had chosen them herself, and no one knew better than Mrs. de Courtenay what would best suit the exquisite *contour* of her majestic form. But by degrees the gnawing misery arose, of perceiving that, whereas her six robes appeared again and again, those of other ladies were as various as their humours, and outdid the rainbow in variety of tint, and the *bijouterie* of Neptune's most sacred cave in splendour of decoration. It was in vain that she expended every sequin she could extract from her brother in sundry subsidiary little ornaments and trimmings; the solid substratum of brocaded silk remained the same, till her fair cheeks blushed as she looked upon it. She hinted to the ambassador the melancholy truth; but, with all the politeness of a practised courtier, he assured her that she was quite

mistaken in supposing that her appearance was in any degree inferior to that of the ladies, her friends; for that he had the satisfaction of assuring her that there was not one among them all who was so universally admired as herself.

"Besides," he added, whispering confidentially in her ear, "if it were otherwise, I have not the power of doing anything more in the way of dress for you at present. The rich silks I bought for you and for Clara in the city of London, made no inconsiderable inroad into my very moderate stock of ready money; and that last entertainment I gave to the Doge has almost made a bankrupt of me."

Another word would be dangerous. Mrs. de Courtenay knew this, and uttered none. But in this speech of her brother's, there was one phrase that awakened a perfectly new idea in her mind—"The rich silks I bought for you *and for Clara*." True, most true; he had bought rich silks for Clara, and these remained still in the safely-packed rolls in which they had been sent home by the merchant. For to say truth, Mrs. de Courtenay was by no means impatient that her daughter should appear in silks and satins. As yet, she had never been permitted to appear in public at all, and the slight and delicate fabric of the Indian looms, as white as her own beautiful skin, formed the robes in which she was presented to such intimate acquaintance as occasionally visited at the embassy in private.

"Why should those silks lie idle?" was the mental exclamation of Mrs. de Courtenay, as her brother walked off to his audience chamber. "What folly! Nay, ten times worse than folly—what extravagance! They may all be injured, moth-worn, ruined before the child is strong enough to stand under the weight of a brocaded gown."

To put in practice the project which grew out of these meditations, required no consultation with any one. Clara knew no more of the silks in her mother's cabinets than of the cups in the butler's pantry, and therefore there was no need to trouble her. And as to Lord Pentegrot, though certainly he had himself chosen the

delicate colours which he intended for the use of his beautiful niece, it was not very likely that he would remember much about it; and even if he did, the delicate attention to his convenience which she evinced in having recourse to this expedient, instead of again applying to him in the pressing necessity occasioned by the approaching carnival, must obtain not only his forgiveness, but his thanks. And the carnival came, and found Mrs. de Courtenay ready to take her place at every fête, not only among the most lovely, but among the most elegantly dressed of the Venetian dames. It is true that the colours and devices of her beautiful brocades were very youthfully gay and delicate; for Lord Pentegrot, who had chosen them, had an excellent taste, and knew well what would become the exquisite fairness of Clara. But this mattered not. The mother was very nearly as fair as the daughter, and as the silks were of the richest, she felt in no way disposed to find fault with them.

Meanwhile the young Clara, who had been hitherto considered as a mere child, was improving in loveliness with every passing day. Lord Pentegrot having long ago decided in his own mind that she was probably the very prettiest girl that ever was born, and that when she was presented to the world, she would infallibly be sought in marriage by many distinguished personages, gave himself no trouble as to the fitting time for such presentation, feeling very perfect confidence in the knowledge of his sister upon such subjects, and certain that, when the proper season arrived, the proper steps would be taken. Perhaps he did his beautiful sister but justice in attributing this knowledge to her; but he blundered when he supposed that knowing what is right, is equivalent to doing it. As Mrs. de Courtenay looked at the perfect form and beaming face of her lovely daughter, she became fully aware that the moment she appeared, she herself would cease to be accounted the most beautiful woman in Venice.

This consideration rendered the idea of introducing Clara extremely painful, and the lady determined to put it off as long as possible. The little affair of the silk dresses, too, rendered this postponement highly desirable;

and therefore when the Lord Pentegrot ventured to say, a day or two before the carnival began—

"Do you not think, sister, that Clara may now be permitted to join in some of the amusements of the season?" Mrs. de Courtenay answered very decisively—

"No, my lord, I certainly think not. She can hardly be considered as fully grown yet, having but just passed her sixteenth birthday."

"Her height appears to me exactly what it ought to be," replied the ambassador; "however, of course you must know best. I should wish, nevertheless, if you please, that the dear child should be permitted to see the grand procession from the Doge's palace to St. Mark's. She need not be seen herself, you know; she shall not be in a state gondola, but merely be permitted to occupy, with her good Alice, a common gondola, with curtains drawn."

Now Mrs. de Courtenay knew perfectly well that when his excellency condescended to say, "If you please," it was a signal that she had better make no further difficulties in complying with any wish he might have expressed; and she accordingly replied—

"Oh! certainly, my lord! There can be no objection to that."

Clara, and her good Alice too, were almost wild with joy when informed that they were to be indulged with the use of a gondola, on the grand canal, on the day of the great procession.

In describing a fête at Venice, nobody ever says, "the weather was beautiful." The weather is always beautiful; and though the festive season arrives at a period of the year when more northern skies are dim, and tramontane winds blow cold, yet there the gliding gondola cuts the wave with the same gentle security in winter as in summer, for the usual features of winter are almost as little known to the denizens of that magic city, as the features of spring. So we must not say, by way of decorating the description of Clara's first introduction to a carnival fête, that the weather was beautiful. Of course, it was beautiful, and everything else was beautiful too, and herself more beautiful than all the rest.

And was it possible that Clara and her indulgent attendant should find themselves in the midst of such a blaze of gallant braveries, and yet never so far transgress the commands of Mrs. de Courtenay, as to be at some short moments visible themselves? It was not possible; but the apparition of good Mrs. Alice's quiet little round face was attended with no disagreeable result whatever, and she grew bolder and bolder, and the sable curtains were drawn back farther and farther; but it was Mrs. Alice's hand that did it, and so Clara thought there could be no harm in looking out.

And what is that brilliant thing that floats upon the wave with such surpassing splendour, and yet seems from its position to be but among the lookers on, making no part of the grand procession to St. Mark's?

"See, Alice!—see! It is covered with silver crescents, and with crimson flags! Oh me! how beautiful!"

"And what a pair of staring eyes are there!" said Alice, hastily closing the dark curtains.

Clara, athwart the licensed aperture of the little window-blind, looked out again, and then she too saw the tremendous eyes that seemed to shine as if a living fire were within them; and though the eyes could see her no longer, they were fixed upon her gondola, and with an eagerness and curiosity that almost frightened her, especially when she perceived that they shone from beneath the rich turban of an infidel. It was one of those rare and brief intervals of peace between the Porte and Venice, which permitted the approach of a Turkish ambassador to the footstool of the Ocean Queen; and the eyes that had so intently gazed upon Clara were, in fact, no other than those of that illustrious functionary himself. In the next moment, the ears both of the young lady and her attendant were aware of some half-whispered words at the prow of their boat, and Alice, peeping out, perceived that a small, unornamented gondola—unornamented save by a silver crescent at the prow—had drove close to them, and that a man on board her was conversing with one of their own boatmen.

"Let us go home, Alice, now. There is no pleasure in being shut up thus, and seeing nothing," said Clara.

"Well, then, my treasure, we *will* go home," replied Alice, who began to think that they had both seen, and been seen, enough.

Hafiz Pacha, the ambassador from the Porte to Venice, had indeed seen Clara de Courtenay, and was quite ready to swear by Mahommed that he had never seen, even in his dreams, anything one thousandth part so beautiful.

Having by prompt measures ascertained the name and station of the young beauty, which he would have been better pleased to have found more obscure, he too withdrew himself from the gorgeous spectacle upon the grand canal, and was speedily seated among cushions, and inhaling the vapour of roses, as he meditated on the best mode of seeing her again.

It is not the custom among Turks to make love by long preliminary agreeability, but Hafiz Pacha was conscious that he possessed many advantages over Turks in general, and he felt the movement of a new ambition within him, leading him to think that it would be exceedingly agreeable to imitate in this instance the manners of the young nobles, (young and old too, perhaps,) whom he saw fluttering round the beauties of the court, and whom he sometimes thought were wasting their time very ridiculously. But just at present he thought differently. He was excessively, and, all things considered, justly proud of having learnt to express himself intelligibly in French, and he suddenly thought that he should like nothing better than making Mademoiselle de Courtenay think him the most agreeable man in Venice. And Hafiz Pacha really was very agreeable, for a Turk, and had become quite intimate and familiar with several gay gentlemen of the society of Venice.

There was one young man, the son of the French ambassador, who took particular pleasure in his company, and it was not possible for a Turk and a Christian to be better friends. To this young Frenchman Hafiz Pacha addressed himself, as soon as the religious ceremonies of the day were over, and, relating his adventure, asked him how it happened that so accomplished a beauty, and one too of such distinguished rank, had never made her appearance at court.

"I will bet fifty louis-d'ors to a sou," replied the young man, "that it is because her handsome mother is jealous of her."

"How?" exclaimed the sensible Mussulman, "an old lady jealous of her own daughter?"

"Take care you do not let the old lady in question hear you, my beloved Pacha, or you will stand an exceedingly poor chance of ever getting another sight of the young one. However, if you will be discreet, I will do my best, both for your sake and my own, to hasten the rising of this beauteous star above the horizon of childhood."

This was uttered with all the graceful vivacity of a young Frenchman of high condition, confident in his own influence of all kinds. For the Duc de Fredonaielle, the father of the Pacha's young friend, was a powerful nobleman, with sufficient influence at home to make him important abroad; and in Lord Pentegrot's opinion especially, the young man appeared deserving of all deference and attention, from being the son of a nobleman to whom he had just lost five hundred crowns without the power of paying one, and upon whose *bon-hommie* he depended for such patience in settling the account, as might save him from exposure in the supercilious eyes of the rich Venetians.

When the young de Fredonaielle appeared before him, therefore, with a respectful but animated request, that he might be the first person permitted to dance with the young beauty, his excellency's niece, whose appearance at the balls of the festive season just commencing was ardently hoped for by all the court, Lord Pentegrot listened with a gracious ear, not only pleased at an opportunity of obliging the son and heir of his right good friend and brother diplomat, but with a slight touch of hope that his young niece, whom, in the midst of all his embarrassments, he really loved exceedingly, might, by possibility, become some day Duchesse de Fredonaielle. In short, the excellent Ambassador of England at length took the affair into his own hands, and, without a word of explanation as to his motives, informed his sister that "*if she pleased*," it was his wish that Clara should be immediately presented at court, and subsequently make her appearance at all the festivities of the carnival.

It boots not to dilate on the feelings of Mrs. de Courtenay at receiving this intimation; suffice it to say, that she too had her own little embarrassments, and that the possibility her brother might take it into his head, that if she were disobliging she might as well be in England as in Venice, which of all things would have been the most inconvenient to her, was sufficient to overcome all her dislike to the proceeding, and her consent was signified in the best grace imaginable, accompanied, however, with a petition that she might be permitted to dress her fair daughter with the elegant simplicity suitable to her tender years, declaring that the effect of her juvenile beauty would be destroyed were she to be loaded with the heavy splendour which was the fashion of the day.

On this point the Lord Pentegrot gave the accomplished lady *carte blanche*, being perfectly aware that her taste in all matters connected with the toilet was unimpeachable. And thus, to her equal surprise and delight, the young Clara was informed that she was to accompany her mother and uncle to the splendid fête about to be given at the Doge's palace. Little did the happy Clara, or her faithful Alice either, suspect that this sudden influx of happiness was owing to the prodigiously bright eyes that had flashed upon her from under a turban. (Red caps, with blue tassels, had not as yet displaced the graceful head-gear of the Mussulman.)

The young de Fredonaielle explained to his friend the Turk, that the only way in his power to obtain the release of Mademoiselle de Courtenay from the nursery, was by asking her to dance, and therefore his excellency must not take it amiss that, in the first instance, he was himself to profit by his successful negotiation; but at the same time he hinted to his turbaned friend that by far the surest way of obtaining permission to approach the daughter, would be by propitiating the favour of the mother; and he strongly advised the majestic representative of the Porte to devote himself entirely to Madame de Courtenay, while her daughter was engaged in dancing.

It may be doubted whether such an arrangement would have been altogether satisfactory, in any other instance,

to a gentleman so violently in love as Hafiz Pacha; but he was perfectly aware of the fact that Turkish ambassadors never do dance; so he pressed the hand of his young friend in European fashion, and bent his head in his own, in token of his being well contented with all he had done.

The evening of the fête arrived. The matchless palace of the Doge blazed with light, which not even the sombre magnificence of Tintoret could conquer. Room after room was traversed by the astonished Clara, with an ecstacy that almost made her fancy she was treading on air, and advancing towards the gates of Paradise through vestibules and ante-rooms worthy of leading to it. At length, the hall of halls was reached. More experienced eyes than those of Clara can hardly look round that almost awfully majestic chamber, even now, and not quail in some sort before the boldness of human genius, that dared to inclose and adorn so vast an area, and then call it a room. No wonder, then, that the lovely novice lost all self-possession, as she beheld it blazing with unnumbered tapers, which the sparkling jewels of the brilliant, but pigmy-looking crowd that spread over the floor, reflected in undulating waves of many-coloured light.

This sort of ardent admiration of any object, or objects, that the eye beholds, is rarely graceful or becoming in the old, but suits well with the newness of young life; and while Clara was wrapt in delight as she gazed upon the glittering mass, each individual of it who was fortunate enough to get a sight of her, gazed upon her with rapture in return. As to the Turk, who, from the elevated estrade occupied by the diplomatic corps, was enabled to watch her as she was led to the immediate presence of the sovereign, he almost began to suspect that a miracle had been wrought in his favour, and that it was an immortal houri, and nothing less, that bloomed before his eyes.

At that moment he would have given a good deal to have made it the custom for Turkish ambassadors to dance; but the thing was impossible, so he wisely determined to abide by the counsel of his young friend, and devote himself altogether to winning the good graces of the young girl's mother.

That much-admired lady had never been in better humour to receive homage, both from Turk and Christian, than at that moment. It had been in fear and trembling that she had given orders for the perpetration of Clara's simple toilet. She saw plainly enough that something was going wrong in the financial department of the Lord Pentegrot, and would no more have ventured to confess what had been done with the silks and satins he had provided for his niece, than to have asked the Doge to lend her his cap. But woman's wit and woman's taste helped her effectually out of the dilemma.

It happily struck her that if Clara could not be made to look like a woman of fashion, it was by no means impossible to make her look like an angel of light; and instead of committing the folly of vainly attempting to render her appearance brilliant, she devoted herself to the more hopeful task of making it almost pastoral in its simplicity. It is very certain that a beautiful young girl looks beautiful in anything; and past numbering are the mistakes which people make in fancying that the form and colour of the garments they wear have a power of communicating beauty: and many a deep-drawn sigh has doubtless followed the discovery of the blunder. But, nevertheless, it will sometimes happen that a pretty caprice, a graceful whim, a piquant singularity, will arouse the attention of the spectator, and make him feel, with increased sensibility, the loveliness that is before him. So was it in the case of Clara.

An audible murmur of admiration ran round the circle that surrounded the Doge, as she appeared to offer her pretty homage, and many favourable thoughts concerning snow-white muslin stole into bosoms bucklered in stiff brocade.

This success was fortunate, in more ways than one, in its power of soothing the feelings of Mrs. de Courtenay; for not only did it remove all fear of an inquiry after the silks and satins, but it tempted her to hope that the unmistakable admiration excited by the appearance of Clara, arose more from the well-fancied peculiarity of her dress, than from any alarming superiority in her beauty. And Mrs. de Courtenay was quite right. Her daughter was really

not at all handsomer than herself, but she was younger. This tiresome reflection, however, did not happen to occur to her, and Mrs. de Courtenay continued in a state of great enjoyment; for not only did the Turk remain seated at her side with an air of devotion that seemed nearly approaching adoration, but very many other noble individuals appeared to be newly wakened to the power of her charms, and of all the ladies of that splendid circle she evidently reigned supreme.

But, alas! the happiness of mortals is doomed to be ever transitory! Scarcely had Mrs. de Courtenay felt in its full extent the dear delight of being *first*, than a sudden cloud seemed to pass over her greatness, threatening it with a chilling eclipse!

In the days that have been, as in the days that are, the women of all the nations of the earth have been justly sensible of the surpassing beauty of the product of the Cashmere looms. Nay, not the women only, but even the manly eyes of many a gallant knight and gentleman have rested with admiration on the graceful *litheness* of a Cashmere shawl. What man that loves, or even admires a woman, but has pleasure in throwing the soft, clinging folds of the matchless fabric around her? Light as air, yet warm as the tender down that envelopes the swan; radiant in colouring, yet, by some strange mystery of art, defying safely all danger of coarse and gaudy effect; seeming to shelter the form it covers from every eye, yet betraying its contour with a grace that no transparent gauze could ever equal,—can we wonder that with all these claims upon the affection of the female heart, it reigns unrivalled there, above all the other textures of the earth?

It chanced that, on the night of Clara's presentation, a certain Marchesa Albadoro, whose immense wealth gave her a very disagreeable sort of pre-eminence in the eyes of Mrs. de Courtenay, appeared in the circle with such a Cashmere shawl twisted round her as had never been seen at Venice, save once upon the person of Hafiz Pacha himself, upon occasion of some peculiarly splendid state solemnity. Hitherto Mrs. de Courtenay had been consoled under all her sufferings from Madame Albadoro's diamonds, by the secret consciousness that, let her be as

splendid as she would, she could never be as perfectly well-dressed as herself, because she could never learn that peculiar art of adapting the dress to the person, which none but a very pretty and very coquettish woman ever does learn to perfection. But now even this source of consolation forsook her.

The form of Madame Albadoro was tall, but though well-formed, it approached, *tant soit peu*, to the meagre; a defect of which Mrs. Courtenay was the more sensible from the beautiful contour of her own exquisitely-moulded form. But now the thing was altogether changed. The flowing drapery of the ample shawl, every fold kept happily in place by the just sufficient weight of the gold-embroidered border, meandered over the Marchesa's graceful length of limb in a manner that suggested the idea of an antique statue; while Mrs. de Courtenay herself was unhappily wearing a scarf, endured for the sake of its costly richness, but which, by the force of contrast, now assumed the appearance of awkward stiffness.

Gracious Heaven!—If Madame Albadoro could assume such grace from being draped in a web of Cashmere, how would her own form look if it were so adorned? For a moment, however, she felt a short relief from a movement of womanly suspicion. That shawl could have reached the hands of the Albadoro only from those of the Mussulman ambassador—an infidel! The whole society would become aware of it—they ought to know it, and they should know it, if the gift of speech was left her but for an hour longer.

By a very natural movement she turned, as these thoughts occurred to her, towards his Asiatic excellency, who still assiduously kept his place beside her, and perceived, greatly to her surprise, that he now wore, though she had strangely overlooked it, the very identical shawl, which, on a previous occasion, had occasioned so great a sensation. She perceived also, that beautiful as was the shawl worn by Madame Albadoro, that of the Turk was incomparably more beautiful still, for it was not only bordered with embroidery of gold, but a shower of golden stars appeared to have fallen over it, giving to its yielding softness a perfection of elegance that was truly admirable.

So very earnest was the gaze which she fixed, almost involuntarily, upon this part of his excellency's paraphernalia, that although not particularly remarkable for the quickness of his perceptions, he observed it, and smiled.

His excellency, indeed, was perfectly conscious that the exquisite web, which, gracefully traversing his ample person, and thrown over his right shoulder, encircled his loins again, and again, and again, in its soft embrace, was by far the most superb specimen of the precious fabric that had ever been permitted to visit Venice; for among all the inhabitants of earth, the sultan only possessed one more perfect still.

Hafiz Pacha made a movement with his hand, which brought still more conspicuously to view the three yards and a half breadth of the marvellous texture, which seemed to have its rosy-tinctured web prevented from finding its fitting place upon the lap of Iris, only by the weight of some dainty devices which some fanciful fairy had traced upon it in gold.

Mrs. de Courtenay looked from the knee of his excellency, over which the embroidered wonder hung, to his face. Perhaps she expected to read there some trace of the fervid feelings which the sun of the East is supposed to impress with peculiar power upon his favourite children. Perhaps she thought that neither saint, savage, nor sage—to say nothing of a Turk, could sit so long beside her without being a little in love!

Mrs. de Courtenay was a lady enjoying the advantages of a more untarnished name than the generality of Venetian beauties could boast of; but at that really awful moment she felt, poor lady! that even an untarnished reputation might have a price. She looked in the Turk's face, but she found nothing there at all likely to bring her nearer the Cashmere shawl, or farther from her own esteem; and from some cause or other she sighed deeply.

Just at that moment, her young daughter, who had been engaged in that distant part of the vast apartment appropriated to dancing, approached the raised dais, on which the most distinguished persons of the court were seated, and blushing like the newly opened blossom of an early rose, sought the shelter of her mother's side. At that

instant Mrs. de Courtenay was startled by a sound from the lips of her Asiatic neighbour, which caused her suddenly to turn towards him, and from that very disagreeable epoch in her existence she became aware that there might be some, though by no means the more civilized part of mankind, who doubted her being the most beautiful lady in Venice.

The Venetian morning began then, as it does now, at about three o'clock, P.M., and it was soon after this hour on the following day, that Mrs. de Courtenay received intimation from my Lord Pentegrot's groom of the chambers, that a member of the Ottoman embassy requested that she would permit his approach. A strange, visionary sort of apparition of the wondrous shawl flitted across her mind, and it was with something like a suppressed sigh that she gave orders to admit him. The gentleman who usually attended the Turkish ambassador on all his visits was then shown in, and when the attendants had withdrawn, he respectfully informed the lady that the noble Mussulman to whose suite he had the honour of being attached, requested permission to wait upon her.

Now Mrs. de Courtenay knew perfectly well that it was almost as much out of the common way for a Turkish ambassador to make morning visits to ladies, as to dance —and again the vision of the radiant shawl flashed across her; but it came not accompanied now with any agitating hopes of Turkish love, or trembling fears for English discretion. In short, she knew not what to make of the unwonted request; but she granted it.

It was not, however, till about the same hour on the following day, that a perfectly unornamented gondola stopped before the palace-stairs of the British embassy, from whence two persons, enveloped in large cloaks, descended. Madame de Courtenay had caught a glimpse of them from behind the curtain of a window that looked out upon the grand canal, but she shook her head, convinced that these were not the visitors she expected. Nevertheless, as speedily as solemn steps could be expected to traverse solemn corridors, the door of the apartment in which she sat was thrown open, and Hafiz Pacha announced. The individual who followed him, and who appeared not to be of the rank of those who attended his

excellency into company, having deposited a packet, which he bore carefully in his arms, upon a marble table which ornamented the centre of the room, retired, having, however, first received an audible command from his turbaned master, "to wait."

The door of the apartment was then closed after him, and the ambassador of the sultan was left *tête-à-tête* with the sister of the ambassador of England. The door was closed upon them, and I will not presume to open it.

The interview was a long one; but what passed in the course of it has never, to the best of my knowledge and belief, been made known to any. All that I can further record of it is, that when at length the conversation between the lady and gentleman was over, the door was opened by the latter, and the person in attendance on him recalled. The Pacha then took the parcel which had been deposited on the table into his own hands, and placing himself between the lady and the attendant Mussulman, pronounced in French—

"Is it for you, madam, or for him?"

A much stronger emotion than usually disturbed the serenity of the English beauty's countenance, passed over it as she listened to the demand; but after a short delay, she replied by silently stretching out her arms to receive the packet which his Ottoman excellency continued to hold in his.

The very instant this action was made, the Pacha stepped forward, with a movement very unusually rapid for one of his nation and rank, and gently laid his burden in the arms of the lady. She received it without uttering a word, and turned away her head from him as she did so; but ere he quitted her, he said distinctly in her ear—

"To be publicly reclaimed, if faith be not rigidly kept."

The lady trembled—but still she answered not, and in the next moment she was alone.

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The opening fête of the carnival given by the Doge was followed by a multitude of others, all extremely splendid, and gaining perhaps in gaiety what they lost in magnificence, from inevitable inferiority of the locale:

not indeed that the saloons of Venice are not among the noblest in the world; but there is no second palace like that of the Doge upon earth.

There was, however, at the carnival balls of that year, one marked inferiority in all that succeeded the one which has been described at the Doge's palace; for at no subsequent one did the young and lovely Clara de Courtenay appear. Innumerable inquiries were made concerning this disappointing eclipse, but all the information which the *beau monde* of Venice could obtain from her mother was, that she had over-fatigued herself on the night of the Doge's ball, and had never been well since.

And was Clara really ill! Had the first opening of her beautiful eyes upon the light of a thousand tapers so overpowered her young spirits, as to render a retreat into the nursery absolutely unavoidable? Her mother said so. Mrs. de Courtenay informed everybody who inquired for her daughter, that it was quite by her own choice, and not by any ordinance of the physician, that she remained at home, while all the rest of the world were dancing; and that she hoped, by indulging her in this wish for retirement, the sort of nervous malady from which she appeared to be suffering would be relieved. When inquiries after the health of an invalid young lady are addressed by an anxious public to her mother, the answers they receive must, of course, pass unchallenged; so all the Venice world declared that the pretty young creature who had enchanted all eyes at the first carnival ball, had been so startled and agitated by the novel scene, that a fever on the nerves had seized her, which must, at least for that year, prevent her appearing among them again. The Lord Pentegrot was uneasy, really very uneasy about her. He was told by her mother, that the irritability of poor Clara's nerves was becoming so great as to create the most serious fears for her reason, and that the only mode of treatment which appeared to affect her favourably, was keeping her in her room with very little light, and in a state of the most perfect stillness.

"The calamity which threatens us," said the good lady, "is certainly the most melancholy in the world. Madness, you know, is generally inherited; and if the thing

gets talked of, you may depend upon it that those who would like to send your lordship home, in the hope of succeeding to your diplomatic honours here, would not fail to seize upon the report, and make the best use of it."

The Lord Pentegrot looked exceedingly frightened.

"Nay, dear brother," resumed the lady, "I say this but to put you on your guard. As yet I am quite sure that we are safe. I suffer no one but Nina, the young Italian girl she is so fond of, to approach her. The sight of poor old Alice irritates her so fearfully, that I have been obliged to confess the truth to the good creature, and she alone, of all your lordship's household, has the slightest idea of the melancholy fact. And I cannot but think, my lord, that the sooner Alice is sent home the better."

"She must be sent off immediately," replied the Lord Pentegrot, knitting his brows. "Yet stay awhile," he added, looking exceedingly ill at ease—"may she not circulate the dangerous report in England!"

"Trust me, there will be no danger from any such report, at the remote village where the daughter of Alice lives, to whom, of course, she must be sent, with a small sum of money, and the promise of continued wages till the result of this unhappy illness is ascertained."

The Lord Pentegrot felt all the wisdom of this measure, and as a special messenger to the British government was about to depart immediately, it was decided that the good nurse should depart with him; a sudden and violent manner of dismissing a faithful old servant, but which was rendered, alas! only too intelligible to her, by the assurance that nothing was considered so dangerous, in the present unhappy state of Clara, as the risk of her seeing her. To which assurance another was added—namely, that if her beloved nursling ever recovered her reason, she should be recalled.

In this most melancholy state of things, it became rather a comfort to the Lord Pentegrot to hear, that the once loved girl from whom he now feared all manner of mischief, was daily declining in health. Nevertheless, both uncle and mother felt that, under the peculiar circumstances of the case, it would be exceedingly injudicious to withdraw themselves from society; and accord-

ingly they withdrew themselves from nothing, continuing to reply to all who continued to inquire about Clara, that she was profiting, both in health and spirits, from being permitted to return to her youthful occupations and amusements, the too sudden and too early dismissal of which had so painfully affected her. Perhaps some people thought, and perhaps some people said, that they wondered how Mrs. de Courtenay, having once enjoyed the gratification of seeing the admiration her beautiful young daughter inspired at court, could now appear without her so contentedly. But these people were not aware that the beautiful mother of the beautiful daughter had a little *affaire de cœur* on the *tapis*, in which her tranquillity had received a dreadful shock, by perceiving that the man she loved and hoped to marry, had gazed upon her daughter as men do gaze when they look upon something which they feel to be more captivating than anything they had ever seen before. Without this feeling, perhaps, the strange catastrophe of my tale might never have occurred. It must be remembered that not only at the first fête of the carnival, but at all those which followed, the Turkish ambassador, and the sister of the British minister, had frequent opportunities of continuing the friendly intercourse which had sprung up between them. His Ottoman excellency, indeed, did not pay Mrs. de Courtenay any more morning visits, but they had often a good deal of conversation together.

At length, however, the appearance of Mrs. de Courtenay in public suddenly ceased, and it was generally understood that the health of her daughter had unexpectedly become worse. Then all the world found out, somehow or other, that she was at extremity, and then the British minister himself became invisible, and all the world was informed that she was dead! It was very melancholy, very shocking, very sad, particularly in the midst of the carnival, but it could not be helped. The Lord Pentegrot was speedily obliged to re-appear, in order to resume his diplomatic functions, and even the greatly compassionated mother thought it her duty to reappear too. And thus, in a very few weeks the recollection of Clara and her muslin frock remained but like

a dream, for everything went on as if she had never existed. There was indeed one remarkable difference perceptible, when the brief mourning permitted by the regulations of court ceremony had passed away. Madame Albadoro was no longer distinguished among all the ladies of the circle by wearing the most magnificent shawl ever seen on European shoulders; for Madame de Courtenay appeared with one fifty times more magnificent still. The eyes of ladies are not given them for nothing—nay, they are not given them only for the purpose of subjugating their masters. Many bright glances, when directed to the resplendent shawl of Mrs. de Courtenay, recognised the wondrous web which they had well nigh worshipped, when they had seen it adorning the portly person of the Turk.

Had Mrs. de Courtenay not been the sister of the British minister—or even had her manifold attractions not been rather particularly displayed, with the obvious intention of charming one who was not a Turk—it is impossible to say what insinuations might not have got into circulation. But as it was, nothing more was said of it than that some commercial treaty might be looked for between England and the Porte, in which it was probable that the latter would be found to have the advantage.

But notwithstanding the matchless shawl, the noble gentleman to whom Mrs. de Courtenay had given her heart, and intended to give her hand, did not, as it proved, think it advisable to take it. Moreover, the Lord Pentegrot lost thousands and only won hundreds, at the games of chance to which he more and more devoted himself; so that altogether the affairs of the family did not appear to go well; and some very abominable Jews, who had been applied to, did not behave as respectfully as they ought to have done: so that, in short, it became evident, both to the British minister and his sister, that the sooner they were recalled from Venice the better it would be for them.

Their departure was not, at least to their own hearts, quite so gay a thing as their arrival. The spirits of Mrs. de Courtenay, after the disappointment in her love-affair,

had drooped exceedingly; and even the sight of her shawl, though she looked at it frequently, did not delight her as it once had done. Perhaps the vacant place in the darkened gondola which used to be occupied by the figure of Clara, when they were borne across the lagune to take possession of the splendid palace prepared for them, might produce somewhat of a painful effect upon her spirits; certain it is that she arrived in London a greatly altered woman.

A peer of the realm, reduced to poverty, is always an interesting spectacle in the eyes of personages in power; and once again the same influence which had been used to send the Lord Pentegrot to Venice now sent him to Portugal, and thither, too, his sister accompanied him. But she was no longer the same lovely appendage to his state as before. Her extraordinary beauty had in a great degree departed from her, and so heavy a gloom had, partly from that cause, and partly from some others, settled on her spirits, that the escape of her brother from his gloomy home into all sorts of undignified dissipation was not greatly to be wondered at. Seventeen years, however, wore away, and they both lived on, both sorely changed in appearance, but continuing, though with great difficulty, to hold the same dignified position in Lisbon which had first brought him there.

At length, there occurred a great change in the management of political affairs at home, and the Lord Pentegrot was recalled. This event reduced him to a state of poverty which no nobleman of exalted views and dignified character could possibly endure; and so he died. The situation of his sister was certainly not much better, but she contrived to live on, though not without difficulty. She had a small pension from the English government, and on this she managed to exist. As to living in London, poor lady, after the lamentable change which her position had undergone, it was not to be thought of, and she accordingly crept away, and deposited herself in the smallest of all imaginable lodgings in the village of Hampton, which placed her so near the court as to enable her to profit, once or twice a year perhaps, by the pitying residue of court favour which permitted her

appearance at the palace on days of reception. Poor, miserable, conscience-stricken Mrs. de Courtenay! Of all the claims to distinction in which she had formerly gloried, she retained but one, and that one was her mysteriously obtained Cashmere shawl. But the glorious nature of this treasure, which partakes in some sort of immortality, preserved this solitary relic in all its pristine brilliance, and though she well knew that, by selling it, she might for a long time save herself from the necessity of the rigid economy she was obliged to practise, she could never bring herself to do it, for she never wore it without perceiving that she was still an object of attention, and probably of envy.

It happened one summer, while the court was at Hampton, that an illustrious nobleman arrived from France, upon a political mission of considerable importance. His arrival was so sudden, and his stay so short, that it was by no means possible to prepare a reception for him at the court of St. James's; but nothing which could be done to make the suburban palace brilliant was omitted, and a fête was given to which all persons in the neighbourhood, who had the *entrée*, were invited. The ball with which the fête concluded was a very splendid one; but of all the beauties assembled there, the young daughter of the French ambassador-extraordinary was the most admired.

She was indeed a very lovely creature, and the fair mother by whose side she sat was scarcely less so. Upon such an occasion it was quite certain that Mrs. de Courtenay and her shawl would be present, and either one or the other, or both, attracted the attention of the Duchesse de Fredonaielle so strongly, that she could not take her eyes away from them.

"What is the name of that very old lady in the magnificent Cashmere shawl?" said the Duchesse to a lady near her; for the Duchesse de Fredonaielle spoke very good English. "Once in my life, a great many years ago, I remember seeing a shawl that, if I mistake not, was very like it. What is the old lady's name?"

"Poor old soul! Does she not look like a spectre?" returned the lady thus addressed. "We all say that she

ought to put her beautiful shawl over head and all. Her name is Mrs. de Courtenay."

The Duchesse de Fredonaielle started violently; but the lady she had spoken to, having turned her eyes in another direction, did not observe it. Her attention, however, was speedily recalled to the noble stranger at her side, by suddenly feeling the weight of her person on her shoulder: the Duchesse de Fredonaielle had fainted.

It is scarcely necessary to say that a considerable degree of confusion ensued; but the Duke, who was the most affectionate husband in the world, being informed of the accident, himself conveyed her to the apartment allotted to them in the palace, and had soon the pleasure of witnessing her recovery, which was as sudden as her illness had been. Poor old Mrs. de Courtenay was sitting in her little closet of a parlour, on the following morning, when the servant girl of the lodging-house threw open the door and announced a name, which her pronunciation rendered perfectly unintelligible; but the old lady stood up to receive her guest. It was the Duchesse de Fredonaielle. She approached the tottering lady with a rapid step, and throwing her arms around her, caused her, with gentle violence, to resume her seat, and then dropped on her knees before her.

"Who and what are you?" screamed the astonished woman,—"are you not the noble Frenchwoman who fainted last night?"

"Mother," replied the beautiful Duchesse, with a sob, —"mother! I am your child!"

"And the Turk?" screamed Mrs. de Courtenay, trembling from head to foot.

"The Turk proved a friendly Christian to me," returned Madame de Fredonaielle, with a gentle smile. "When I made him understand that I could not love him, he gave me to one whom I could and did love, though I had only danced with him once, mother. But he loved me as quickly. He watched over my destiny, and converted it to the most happy one that ever befel a woman. Mother! you have nothing to regret."

It is to be hoped that this assurance soothed the last

hours of the wretched Mrs. de Courtenay; but she did not long survive the surprise which the appearance of her daughter occasioned her. A visit from the Duke and from her grandchild was proposed to her, but she declined both; and when the forgiving Duchesse came to repeat her pious visit for the third time, which was on the third day after their first meeting, she found that her mother was dead.

The wretched lady had found time, however, to make, and properly execute, a last will and testament, by which she bequeathed to her daughter the magnificent Cashmere shawl.

The Organist and his Daughter.

Among the innumerable enjoyments of life must surely be counted the act of travelling, with all its consequent results of new images, new ideas, and new emotions, gathered as we go. There are foreign travels and home travels, both exceedingly delightful to the locomotive individuals who perform them, provided always that the said travels are set about wholly and solely for the delectation of the traveller, and not upon compulsion, or upon that sharp necessity of moving from place to place, after the manner that I heard briefly and expressively described the other day on board the Folkestone steamboat on its passage to Boulogne, by a *gentleman traveller*, who said, dolorously enough, I thought, "I can never hope by any chance to sleep in less than three hundred different beds any year." Not exactly after this manner should I call travelling delightful; but when set about by less useful bodies, who may turn which way they like, prompted solely by their own particular will and whim, I almost doubt if any other occupation of time be equally so.

Of the travelling abroad we hear a good deal, but of the travelling at home, very little; and yet for those peeps into real living life, which it is always interesting to take, and often interesting to hear of, it may be doubted whether the home-peepers do not sometimes see more clearly than those who only peep abroad.

It is not very long ago since some of my home wanderings took me to one of our fine old cathedral cities. I shall be very careful not to say which — nay, not to

give any quite unmistakable local touches—because I am going to tell about people as well as things, and it is vile to be personal. Besides, we all know that a study after nature may sometimes be too faithful.

The beautiful little Gothic cathedral of my episcopal city stands holily apart in its quiet close, to which it gives an air of tranquil dignity and solemn beauty which may and must be felt, but which I conceive it impossible to describe. A very few years ago, however, the foreground of the gracious edifice, look at it from what quarter you would, presented nothing more attractive to the eye than a wide expanse of rudely-laid pebbles, across which passed the paved roads, or streets, at right angles to each other, for the purpose of approaching the prebendal houses, and one or two less dignified dwellings that had stolen in among them; the whole of the shapeless area being dotted over by a multitude of stumpy white posts, connected together by chains, which seemed intended to guard the pebbles and the paving-stones from each other.

But now the aspect of the place is wholly different, and improved in a degree so wonderfully great in proportion to the simplicity of the process which has achieved the change, that at the first glance given by those who knew it formerly, and see it now, it seems like the work of magic. This process was neither more nor less than removing the pebbles, and laying down soft fine turf in their stead. A few venerable and highly picturesque elm-trees stretch their branching arms around the building, as if to shelter it, and often in the breeze of evening may be seen bowing their lofty heads in salutation to the pinnacles that rise above them, loftier still; so that altogether the trees, the turf, and the grey stone blend into a very pleasing harmony, and seem to prepare the spirit for its passage from the world without, to the world within the sacred fane.

The prebendal houses are, as they ought to be, very handsome houses, each one with more or less of "garden trim," enclosed within lofty walls as venerably grey as the cathedral itself. But on one side of the close, immediately behind the sacred edifice on its eastern side, and

so completely hidden by it as to be invisible to all, save those who go expressly to seek its humble door, is a little bay-windowed dwelling, looking even smaller than it is, by the contrast it offers to its majestic neighbour. Its one sharply angular window is screened from all intrusive eyes by those high, green canvas blinds of some fourscore years of age or so, yet still so well preserved as to defy the most curious eye to pierce through them, and discover how the small room they shelter is occupied within.

But if the gentle reader will trust to my description, he shall know something about it, without using any unjustifiable means for getting a sight of it himself. The little parlour, which, by the help of its bow, is at least twelve feet long, though not more than ten feet wide, has been the constant living room by day of three individuals for the last seven-and-twenty years, and of the parents of one of them for many a long year before. But at the beginning of the above-named period of twenty-seven years, one of its three inhabitants did not contribute much to crowd it, for that one was a new-born female babe.

The little maid's father was organist of the cathedral, as his father had been for nearly half a century before him; and her mother was the very pretty, very gentle, but very simple daughter of a small farmer in the neighbourhood, who, in marrying Mr. Oldbury the organist, truly believed in her heart that she had made a greater match than ever village girl had made before. That the worthy organist was forty years her senior, in her estimation mattered not a jot. She was as decidedly Mrs. Oldbury, and as certainly sat, morning and evening, every Sunday of the year, in a snug little corner in the organ-loft, as if her spouse had been twenty instead of treble that age; or as if, instead of seventeen, she had herself been forty. For Mary Hobson had nothing flirt-like, or even frolicsome in her nature; and excepting for her slight figure, and her pretty little face, she might very well have been sixty also.

Hubert Oldbury had been married once before, and the wife of his youth had loved him as an amiable young

wife loves an amiable young husband; and, though childless, they had been a very happy couple—more happy, indeed, than poor Hubert ever expected to be again; but he knew not what was in store for him. Mary Hobson's innocent little face had caught his fancy, and she seemed so very docile and so very good, that he ventured upon making her his wife, though he thought when he did it, that he was perhaps a rash man. And so he, doubtless, was; but he was also a lucky one.

Within a year after this second marriage he became the father of a little girl; and the old man was startled, and almost bewildered, by the sensation of new and unexpected rapture with which he gazed upon the little helpless treasure. His young wife liked to be a mother too, but her joy was in no degree like his; and this, not only because she was a young thing to whom the event seemed greatly more natural than startling; but also because her nature was still more unlike that of her husband than her years.

It was a very ardent spirit that still warmed the heart, and animated the fancy, of that old man; there was something of poetry in his composition, which, though it had never found any other vehicle of expression than the keys of the majestic instrument by which he gained his bread, was, nevertheless, poetry still, and lent an earnestness and a refinement to his feelings which nothing but that sort of temperament can give. His demeanour was gentle, but had nothing beyond what might be passed under that epithet to distinguish him from many millions of other poor men who lived honestly by means of small gains procured by their own exertions. Yet this exterior was only for the world, and for his pretty little wife, perhaps, among the rest. But for Huberta (for he had fondly given his own baptismal name to his little daughter) —for Huberta and himself he had a good deal more.

I am not going to attempt the impossible achievement of imitating that marvellously fine portion of Zanoni which introduces to our intellectual acquaintance a sort of poetical abstract of an etherealized Paganini; I am not going to attempt it; first, because neither I nor any one else, as I believe, could succeed in the attempt if

they made it; and secondly, because, if I did, I should still fail of giving any correct idea of *my* heroine's musical father. For Hubert Oldbury was a very pious Christian, and had he not been so, he would have been a much less admirable organist; which, as I take it, will sufficiently prove that the most able imitation of the wayward enthusiast of Naples could not assist me in giving an idea of my old musician. Phrenologically speaking, Hubert Oldbury was probably as strongly marked out by nature for the vocation he followed as the Neapolitan himself; but whereas the gifted Italian's imagination seemed to create around him a world that owed its origin to himself alone, old Hubert, in his moments of most highly-wrought excitement, only fancied he was finding his way to heaven by harmony; and he almost wept, good man, while pealing away the half-inspired strains of his Handel, to think of the devotion of that God-chastised race, who were doomed to the penance of hanging their idle harps upon the trees.

As old Hubert was not a phrenologist, I know not how it happened that, before his little daughter was old enough to produce a note of music, he felt perfectly assured that nature had created her a musician:—but so it was. Perhaps, as he made her mother hold the child on her knee beside him as he played, he saw some movement, some undefined but visible emotion, in her deep blue eye, that told of a spirit within, which was ere long to hold communion with his own.

Nor was he disappointed in this; for his little daughter was scarcely five years old, ere she gave such decided evidence of the gift she had received at her birth, as to lead many besides her happy father to declare that it was his duty to cultivate to the best of his power a talent from which it was very evident she might reap both fame and fortune. And the playing and the singing of the little Huberta began to be talked of by a good many people of consequence. The dean's housekeeper assured the dean's lady that she did not, on her conscience, believe that ever such a wonderful little creature had been seen on the earth before. And this having been many times repeated to the dean's lady, at length reached

the ears of the dean himself. And then old Hubert was kindly invited to bring his little maid to the deanery; and so well did she justify the housekeeper's report, that the father and child were again invited, and this time there were many persons collected to listen to the young phenomenon. And the little soul, though at other times a rather shy and timid child, so totally forgot all the fine folks around her, as soon as she was placed on the music-stool and told to play, that she disgraced not any of the eulogists who had prepared the company for disappointment by the enthusiasm of their praises.

For a little while the worthy organist was delighted at all this; but then he began to hear a multitude of prophetic whisperings on the subject of his little Huberta, that made him suddenly assure all the kind ladies and gentlemen of the close that his child had shown symptoms of delicate health, and that, to avoid fatiguing her, she was to play no more for the present before company. This was really a very provoking disappointment to many; for a musical phenomenon in a country town is an acquisition of no inconsiderable importance. But it was the fair lady who was the cause of it that, justly enough, was the first to feel its effects. The Honourable Mrs. Wimbleton, the wife of one of the prebends, had assured poor trembling Mr. Oldbury, that if it was not by some very culpable negligence entirely his own fault, she would take upon her to say that his little girl might live to be a *primà donna* at every opera in Europe—which would be a glory to England as well as to him.

For one short moment old Hubert looked, as the Honourable Mrs. Wimbleton declared, perfectly stupified; but the fact was, though she did not find it out, that the good man stood before her during this interval in the act of prayer, and earnestly indeed did he implore Him who by His voice divine had commanded that little children should be brought unto Him, that his little one, his little Huberta, might straightway lie down and die, rather than live to fulfil this fearful prophecy; but no sooner had he finished his prayer than his ear again became sensible to many other words of like import, uttered by kind ladies and gentlemen, in order to con-

vince him that the more the little girl studied at home, and the more she appeared before her kind friends abroad, the better it would be for her, inasmuch as it would aid and assist in accomplishing what ought to be the first object of his life—namely, the preparing her for making her appearance on the stage. Hubert Oldbury said very little in reply; in truth he scarcely spoke at all; but he bowed his gray head very civilly, and taking his little girl by the hand, told her to make a courtesy, and led her away.

Now the Honourable Mrs. Wimbleton had very kindly determined upon giving a *soirée*, to which not only all the close, and all the native aristocracy of the town were to be invited, but some of the first country families also, all for the express purpose of hearing the singing and the playing of the little Huberta, to whom she intended to present a particularly pretty new frock on the occasion. Great, therefore, was her disappointment when the gracious present and summons were dispatched, to find that the first was returned, and the second declined on account of the delicate health of the little girl. Nevertheless, the impression which the child had made was too strong to be easily forgotten, and for many months inquiries were made and invitations repeated; but when it was found that the same answer was ever returned, everybody concluded that the seemingly premature fruit had proved but a blighted bud, and that they need trouble themselves no more about the old man's child.

But, though all danger was thus happily over, the poor organist did not recover from his fright, but kept steadily in view the resolutions he had taken on hearing the flattering prophecy of the Honourable Mrs. Wimbleton—namely, that the first object of his remaining years should be, the keeping his Huberta where she could neither be seen nor heard by anybody in the very least degree fashionable and genteel; and the second, to educate her himself to the very best of his little power and skill.

It would be difficult to say which of the two resolutions he had kept the most faithfully, and about equally so, perhaps, to decide which of the two pro-

duced the greatest influence on the character of the little girl.

If no such alarm had been given, the humble musician's child would certainly not have been likely to have seen much of the world, or to have been much seen by it. But the difference in such a case is very great between a little and not at all. In the morning early, almost in time to hear the lark's first song, Huberta was led into the pleasant meadows near the city, by the hand of her father; and again, at eventide, both mother and father, when the weather was fair, failed not to take her with them to a pretty rustic water-mill, the foot-road to which was an unfrequented path, rarely or never trod by gentlemen or ladies, and therefore, as old Hubert thought, especially well suited to them. Excepting for this daily exercise, and for a visit paid to Mrs. Oldbury's parents about four times a year, the organist's daughter literally never left her father's roof. In respect to her education, the old man was not quite so much his own master as in the matter of seclusion; yet even on this point he kept his resolution as faithfully as on the other, for he had only resolved to give her the best he could, and this he most assuredly did.

But no inconsiderable part of Hubert Oldbury's little income arose from giving singing lessons to the choristers of the cathedral; and as the doing this with the most patient and sedulous attention appeared to him a duty, only second in sacredness to the care of his daughter, his time was very greatly occupied by it. A portion, however, of his twofold task could be advantageously performed with his pupils and his little girl together. The music that he best loved to teach her could not be practised better than when the boys were practising also. By degrees, however, she began to accompany both herself and them upon the organ; and when she had reached the age of fifteen, had any eyes been permitted to look at her when seated at the instrument, breathing a strain to which angels might have listened well pleased, she might have been mistaken for an angel herself, and supposed, being immortal, to have sat as the model of the saint of saints, to Raphael. But excepting the little

boys, there was no one to look at her, save her father. Among those little boys, however, there was one nearly of her own age, but so small in stature as to appear younger still, who had already for many a day contrived to look a little at Huberta, without greatly neglecting his score.

Henry Morley was the organist's favourite pupil and his best. Not that his voice was better, or even so good as that of one or two other boys, but he sang with taste and feeling. Nor was the old Hubert at all more aware of this fact than the young Huberta. And Henry, in his turn, listened to her as no other could listen to her, no, not even her father. And she knew all this; and she knew, too, that nobody understood Henry's singing, and the manner in which it should be accompanied, but herself. Yet they very rarely spoke much together, and never but in the presence of the good organist, who no more suspected that Henry thought Huberta an angel, or that Huberta knew Henry to be a poet, than his good wife herself, who was ironing the shirts at home.

But all this mysteriously clear understanding between the boy and the girl was not to last long, for the fortunate destiny of the boy ordered it otherwise. The father of Henry Morley had himself been a chorister, but had given up this as he had advanced in life, and was now keeping a preparatory school for little boys, with so much credit and respectability, that more than one of the clergy attached to the cathedral had entrusted their children to him as day scholars, for a year or two before dismissing them from the paternal roof for public education.

It was well known, however, that the young Henry, boy as he was, had the honour and glory of teaching the Latin grammar at this very flourishing little day school, and as he was known likewise as one of the most correct, as well as the most pleasing, of the justly boasted choir of the cathedral, he had a sort of name and fame among the dignitaries, which eventually led to great advancement. It chanced that one of the prebends was father to an urchin who, in his way, had also acquired fame and name, being considered by all who knew him as the very naughtiest boy, and the very greatest dunce, upon record.

The governess had given him up, after a long trial; his mamma had given him up, after a longer; his father had tried his hand and rod for a fortnight, and then declared that he must give him up too!—so that the reverend family of this very irreverend child were reduced to despair.

"Upon my word, Dr. ——," said the mamma, "I think the best thing we can do will be to send him to Morley's school. He will be flogged to death if he goes to any *real* school in the state in which he is now."

"Upon my word that is a capital idea, my dear," replied the doctor; "I wonder I never thought of it before. Young Morley shall be sent for. I will speak to him myself."

And young Morley came, and he listened to the very melancholy paternal communication with great attention, and though he was a very little fellow for his years, he left the doctor in better spirits than he found him, chiefly in consequence of having repeated twice in a voice that sounded like that of gentleness itself—

"I will be patient with him, sir."

Henry kept his word. He was patient, and his patience was rewarded. The child he had to deal with was no fool, and having made this discovery, Henry soon found means of convincing others of its truth. In short, the father became persuaded that as nobody ever had, so nobody ever would have, as much power over him as Henry Morley, and as the young scapegrace was an only son, proposals were made to Henry's father to permit his son's going to school with the boy, in order both to cram him, and keep him in order. But the sacrifice on the part of Henry's father was too great, and the offer was refused, till it was repeated with a promise to send the young tutor to Oxford, all his expenses paid, upon condition of his remaining with his pupil (who was but three years his junior) for four years at Eton. This was too temptingly glorious to be refused, and Henry Morley left his father's school, and his choral duties, and his music lessons, and the organ-loft, and Huberta, in the hope of becoming in process of time a scholar, a gentleman, and, as he hoped in his secret heart, a clergyman also.

And how did it fare with the little girl when he was gone? Had each told each that the thing most dear on earth was the other? No, never! Nor was there any need of such avowal between them; neither of them had any doubt of the fact. But what was the use of talking about it? It was a melancholy parting, though nobody knew it but themselves, for the great good fortune of Henry was the only theme dwelt upon when his departure was spoken of, and to talk of it as a subject of regret would have been quite absurd. So the two young hearts throbbed, and swelled, and ached, and sunk in silence. But the condition of the boy was incomparably the least melancholy: for though of a gentle spirit, he was ardent in hope, and though the prospect of his marrying Huberta was distant and dim, he could still look steadily at it, and think that it might be reached at last by means of his own unwearying exertions. And it was this thought that converted his last farewell look into a smile. But Huberta did not see it, for her eyes, in spite of all her struggles, were dim with tears, and she had no hope within to check them.

Years wore away, and nothing that Henry Morley had hoped and intended to do, had been left undone. Very literally indeed was he a *private* tutor during his school-boy days, for no one knew or guessed how conscientiously he devoted himself to the task he had undertaken. But in this most surely was his virtue its own reward; for, by the process of earnest and most assiduous teaching, he became himself a scholar, and the self-teaching he had received in his younger days was rapidly atoned for. In process of time, he became head of the school, dragging his idle pupil after him, in a manner to satisfy very fully the hopes of his patron. And then the two lads moved on together to the university, and here again all went well with them; and the hopes of Henry, although as yet he could have only hope, and nothing else, strengthened, term after term, and year after year, till at length the decisive moment came, and he obtained a first class degree.

Of course all this good news, throughout all the six long years which it took to achieve it, was made known

from month to month—nay, almost from day to day—to the friendly organist and his family; for Henry's mother was a proud woman, and though her husband's school had fallen away almost to nothing, and though she found it hard enough to live, even with the help of a fortune bringing in twenty pounds a year, recently inherited from her parents, she ceased not to boast pretty loudly of the honour and glory and unequalled prosperity that had fallen upon them by means of her son. And the good news was welcomed joyfully by old Hubert, now in very advanced old age, for he still called Henry his dear pupil, and in his heart believed that the boy owed his success to what he had learned from him. And it was welcomed more joyfully still by old Hubert's wife; for, simple soul as she was, she had long ago spied out the secret love of the famous scholar for her daughter, and though she did not talk much about it she thought the more, and felt quite freshly over again that when she had married the organist of ——, she had indeed done something for her family, and she would defy anybody to say that she might not live to be the mother of a parson's lady yet.

And how did the good news affect Huberta? Had the pale, black-eyed chorister-boy remained her idol during the six important years that had changed the tender, faltering, blushing girl into an intellectual and most lovely woman? Oh, yes. There was no shadow of changing in Huberta's nature. The first sensation of her infant heart had been warm, tender, grateful love to her old father, and that dear father was the object of precisely the same sentiment now, only grown stronger, more defined, and better understood by herself. And as an infant she had fondly loved her gentle mother too, and fondly did she love her gentle mother still. The first conscious workings of her intellect had seized on the philosophy of harmony as its natural food, and such it was still. But no pure and uncorrupted spirit can thus feed without growing purer, and better still; nor is it harmony of soul alone that raises the spirit so gifted towards heaven. It vibrates in unison with the harmony of all created things, and while kept as clear from the harsh discords of earth as that of Huberta,

seems more than half angelic before it flies home again to the realms above.

This heart, this spirit, devoted to Henry Morley at an age too early to name without danger of ridicule, were devoted to him still, and it was no more possible that Huberta Oldbury should ever love another man, than that she should learn to prefer a jew's-harp to her organ, or the melody of "Jump Jim Crow" to that of "Angels ever bright and fair."

Neither had these six years passed away without Henry's having found a few opportunities of explaining to her that the perspective of his enlarged prospects always terminated at the same point, and that if elective empires were still in fashion, and that instead of having only been sent to Oxford he had chanced to have become a reigning Cæsar, it would have made no difference—she must either have promised to become his wife, or have seen him sink into an early grave. Nor was this more truly uttered than truly believed. And now, then, is it necessary to say how all the good news concerning Henry Morley affected Huberta Oldbury? By gentle degrees, her old father, and her still young mother, were made acquainted with this attachment, and the engagement which grew out of it was sanctioned by the blessing of both.

On the side of Henry's parents matters did not go quite so smoothly. The poor old man, indeed, never dreamed of making any opposition, nor would have done, had his "extraordinary son," as he always called him, announced his intention of marrying in process of time either the daughter of a duke or of a cobbler. He considered him as a person infinitely too superior to all the rest of the world for any person whatever to be in a situation to give him advice with propriety. Besides, to say truth, he did sometimes look at the clean and quiet comfort of the Oldburys' little establishment with envy.

As the organ of the cathedral continued to be better played than that of any other church in the kingdom, neither the dean nor the chapter troubled themselves to inquire whether it were done by the fingers of the still healthy old man, or by those of the delicate little girl,

whose health, as was well remembered, had been too fragile to permit of her becoming a phenomenon. So Hubert Oldbury was organist still; and still, by some means or other, the singing class prospered as well, or rather better than ever, under his care, and thus his professional appointments had suffered no diminution. Moreover, his wife's worthy father, the farmer, was dead, and had left Mrs. Oldbury eight hundred pounds; and thus the little family went on extremely well; which was more than could be said of that of their neighbour Morley. They also, indeed, had but one only child, and he was provided for: but still there was rent to pay, and neither father nor mother could do without food, and fire, and clothing; so that their twenty pounds a year, with the miserably little profit arising from the school, could by no means suffice to produce as comfortable a little *ménage* as that of the organist.

But notwithstanding her poverty, Mrs. Morley was exceedingly ambitious, and did not scruple to declare to her husband—nay, even to her son himself, that in her estimation nothing on earth could be much more absurd than the idea of a young man who, in all earthly probability, would one day be a clergyman, talking of marrying the daughter of an organist! However, Mrs. Morley was not only ambitious, but very sensible, and she knew well, as she told one or two confidential friends, that there was no occasion for her to frighten herself about any such nonsense. Oxford scholars, she had often heard, would talk about love and such like foolery, sometimes, let them be ever so clever, and she supposed her son would do like the rest of them; but that when a gentleman and a clergyman thought about matrimony, it was altogether a different affair, and people in general, she believed, began to know that Henry was no fool. So she contented herself with occasionally telling her son that he would find he was mistaken if he fancied he was to marry Berta Oldbury, and adding the same as a postscript to every letter she wrote him; conceiving this, together with his increasing age and dignity, sufficient to secure him from all serious danger.

As soon as Henry had taken his degree, he thought

that his prospects were sufficiently improved to justify his asking Huberta to correspond with him, which he had never ventured to do before, as never, till this trial was passed, had he felt sure of the result. For who can answer for their own firmness of nerve under such an ordeal? But when this was settled he felt assured that as a teacher he could gain his bread, and then he asked for the indulgence for which he had been longing for years, and his old master made no objection to it, and his young mistress wished for it with no less ardour than himself, and the commencement of this correspondence formed a new epoch in their lives.

And then it was that the little bay-windowed parlour became a paradise to Huberta, for she had it all to herself—all to herself and her writing-desk. Her dear old father, despite his four-score years, still passed whole hours in the organ loft. Sometimes with one pupil, sometimes with another, blowing the bellows for him, and receiving from time to time important hints upon chantings of all sorts. Her mother, the most active and neat-handed of housewives, knew better than to sit in a parlour, and waste her time in looking over the green canvas blinds, or than even looking in the face of her beautiful daughter as she wrote, with the most delicate of crowquill pens, long pages of heart-inspired eloquence to her lover. And thus it was that Huberta had the little bay-windowed parlour to herself.

The perfect stillness, both without and within, was, during these delicious hours, a blessing beyond all price. If she raised her eyes to meditate, which most, of all the crowd of thoughts that dwelt upon her heart, she wished to communicate, they rested on the beautiful curve of the Lady Chapel, which immediately faced the window. No passing step, no ill-toned, idle voice, disturbed the deep repose. All was peace; not rustic, rural peace, with its chirping sparrows, and its lowing herds, but a sort of holy cloistered peace, more tranquil still.

And thus passed one, two, three, smooth, pensive, contemplative years. Henry's first pupil, the prebend's son, was already ordained, and had already got a very excellent living; and Henry, meanwhile, got several

pupils, and during the vacations felt that he envied no man, for then he passed whole days in the company of Huberta; they walked, they read, they sang, they talked together. And the happy future, though distant, very distant still, began to take something like a palpable shape before their eyes. Henry must endeavour to get connected with some school, and then they would marry, and whether rich or poor, happy they must be.

Ere long a friend of Henry's, greatly his superior in position, as well as in age, but warmly attached to him, and perfectly aware of his superior talents, suggested the propriety of his standing for a vacant fellowship in one of the first colleges of the university; and in an evil hour the young man listened to him; he became a candidate, and succeeded. At first, this was a matter of exceeding joy, and well it might have been had no Huberta Oldbury existed; for the fellowship was a very good one, and his college was amongst the richest in the university in respect to its church preferment. Of course, the next step in the young man's career was his taking orders, and the thrice happy Mrs. Morley directed a letter to her son, prefixing the word "Reverend" at full length to his name.

And now again, as a matter of course, was Huberta superlatively happy,—for the man she loved—oh, so very dearly!—was on the high road to preferment, to fortune, to station, to everything, in short, that his most affectionate well-wisher could desire for him. And did she at all perceive athwart this bright halo of success, the vague uncertainty of the distance at which the event was placed that was to blend their lives and fortunes into one? Not quite immediately. For some months after his becoming fellow of —— College, and for longer still after that prime ambition of her heart, his ordination, took place, the letters from behind the canvas blinds were written in a sort of ecstasy of hope and joy, that seemed to wrap her spirit round with happiness, so that no doubts or fears had power to reach her.

And then followed that earth-born reaction of the spirits, which ever comes after great excitement and exhilaration, as if to remind us that we had better not

fancy ourselves in heaven already, but remember that there is still a good deal to be borne and done before we get there. And then the pen rested suspended in her hand, and the sweet blue eyes would remain raised, and fixed abstractedly for minutes together on the delicate tracery of the Lady Chapel windows, and the winged thoughts grew heavy, and could not spring forward into the future with such elastic lightness as they were wont to do. Realities, dark, heavy, present realities, would press round, and sit like imps and nightmares on her heart, till the pain caused her to move, and rouse herself in the hope to get quit of it; and then she looked down upon her paper, and saw with astonishment that it was blank!

This was quite new, and very strange to her, for ever till now, the pages had seemed to fill themselves—oh, so much faster, than she wished them to do!—for the little crowquill ran along the lines as if propelled by some impulse within—that she had as little power as wish to check. Where was that impulse now? Could she recall it? Could she again write on, she knew not how, but even with a feeling of enjoyment, which, exquisite as that with which she devoured the dear reply, was to her life what the sun is to the universe? What! could she no longer feel when writing to Henry, that the allotted space was all too small? Was that outpouring of her thoughts, which knew no boundary to its full sincerity but the want of words, for ever checked by the fear of communicating some little flavour of that bitter drop that began, by slow degrees, to settle at the bottom of her heart—that sickening poison of dear hope delayed, which gives a faintness worse than death itself?

All this is written and is read at a rapid, easy rate, that serves but ill to illustrate the manner of its working in the heart of Huberta. It took three weary years to bring her to the state I have described; and during that time she had never written nor spoken a single word that could convey an idea of the despondency that was eating like a canker into her soul, either to Henry or to any other *human* being whatever.

One must know a little by experience the order of sensations produced by hope delayed, before it is possible to

give all the honour to such forbearance which it deserves. As the stated period for Henry's visit approached, how often was her pleasure blighted by the dread that her resolution might fail, and that she might let him see some portion of the heavy weight that hung upon her spirits. But again, and again, and again, this dismal fear proved vain; for the sight of that loved face, the sound of that dear voice, the deep delight of listening to the assurance, ever dearer and more dear, of ceaseless and undying love, chased the dark demon that tormented her, and made her feel—alas, how certainly!—that she had still the power of tasting happiness. And two more years passed on, without a murmur ever passing from within the heart of Huberta, and with little that could be fairly called so from her lover.

But widely different was their lot, and widely different (as in such sad cases it must ever be) was the merit of endurance in each. The career of the stout-hearted Henry was active, useful, and cheering. He had many pupils, and was well paid for them; his acquaintance, his intimacies with the most estimable and distinguished portion of his contemporaries, went on pleasantly increasing, till he had more than sufficient of excellent society to occupy every leisure hour, and to stimulate his talents to the exercise which is at once the most healthful and agreeable that human faculties can enjoy. That he should, some day or other, have a good living, was, if he lived, a matter of certainty; and meanwhile his income was more than sufficient for all his wants, and enabled him, moreover, to chase everything like want from the humble dwelling of his father. He felt conscious every year of increasing vigour both of mind and body; nor could he be quite blind to the fact, that from a slim, and somewhat sickly-looking youth, he had grown into a manhood of more than ordinary comeliness. Tall, and very finely formed, with coal-black hair, and dark eyes of remarkable beauty and expression, Henry Morley could not be seen without admiration.

Yet all these accidents of nature and fortune had not spoiled him, nor had he lost in the very least degree the pure, young, fresh devotion of his love for Huberta—*only*

he had not yet learned to feel that years will sometimes lengthen as they go, till the object to which they seem to lead appears so fearfully to increase in distance, that despair is apt to jostle hope aside, and become the companion of our way.

Meanwhile, the evening trio in the little parlour behind the Lady Chapel, became a very sad one. The poor organist waxed weaker and weaker, but his intellect was perfectly clear still, and a very reasonable anxiety took possession of him, as to the immediate fate of his wife and child, when his salary as organist, and his allowance for instruction to the boys of the choir, should be lost to them by his death. Although it was quite certain that his daughter had long become his substitute in both, it was no less so, that to his name the remuneration was paid, and what was to become of her and her mother when that name ceased to be counted among the living? That his lovely and still young Huberta should apply for the place of singing mistress to the boys of the cathedral, was of course quite out of the question; but he thought that, under all the circumstances, the place of organist might be obtained for her.

The old man thought, too, of the great success which had attended the infantine display of her talents some twenty years before; and though he was, if possible, further than ever from regretting that he had not permitted her to profit by the display of them, he began to think that, in the widely different walk of instruction, they might now become available to her support.

Her engagement to Henry Morley was a source of great comfort to him; but he had passed the age when fancy has strength and power sufficient to bring the sorrows, the regrets, the hopes, and the fears, which make the chief history of life, so vividly home to the heart, while yet they still lie unborn within the womb of time, as to make all the evils attendant on the distant and uncertain period of its fulfilment a matter of any great wailing.

What he did feel was the certainty that the interest of his wife's little fortune of eight hundred pounds, which he had placed in the funds in her name, would not

be sufficient to insure bread and shelter to her and her daughter when he was gone; and seldom did an evening pass over them without the old man's recurring to the theme, with a view to pressing upon them the necessity of at once endeavouring to secure the appointment of organist for Huberta, and of making interest at the same time among the ladies of the dignitaries for the honour of becoming music-mistress to their daughters.

Mrs. Oldbury affectionately blessed the old man for his thoughtful care, and declared that she would set about putting his excellent plan into execution as soon as ever Huberta could find time to dress herself and go out with her. But Huberta, though as gently obedient to command as before the mature womanhood of twenty-five years had reached her, was not on this occasion so alert in her compliance as she was wont to be. Far was she from disliking the duties of an organist. She had performed them long, and there were moments when these duties had more power to elevate her spirit above all the sorrows and the fears of earth than any other occupation whatever. But she felt a very painful doubt as to the manner in which Henry might receive the information that she was about to apply for the situation. That she had long performed its duties, he well knew; and often had she heard him declare that he never loved her so well as when watching her with the inspiration of a saint, and the piety of a Grecian daughter, aiding her poor father in his weakness. To his eyes there was something sublime in this, and Huberta felt that, when his wife, it would ever be remembered by them both with pleasure. But the case would, as she strongly suspected, be far different in his eyes were she to be hired to the task. Still less did she believe that he would endure the idea of her parading her talent from house to house in search of bread.

Henry was no way boastful of his new dignities, but Huberta had tact enough to see and feel that his station had become that of a gentleman, and that he knew it. In reply, therefore, to the often repeated proposal that she should wait on one great lady or another, and respectfully intreat her interest and patronage for obtaining

both the appointment and the scholars, Huberta had again and again pleaded for a little delay. But this could not go on for ever; for her father, who indeed felt that he had not long to live, became urgent with her to comply with his request, till at length she gave a promise that she would delay no longer; stipulating, however, that she must obtain the consent of Henry before she began the work of supplication. And she waited but for the tranquil hour of the following morning, at which the little parlour was sure to be her own, in order to write to him.

The task was a painful one. She did not like the throwing herself upon him thus, and making him, as it were, responsible for her having the means of existence, in case his affection should shrink from her labouring to supply those means herself.

Where was now the tender, the delicious feeling with which the writing-desk used to be opened? Where the enjoyment of feeling that she might write, and write, and write, without the slightest danger that any obtrusive eye from without, or voice from within, should interfere with her luxurious solitude? Gone, quite gone—the poetry of life seemed to be vanished for ever, and nothing left in its place but a miserable anxiety to find wherewithal to be fed and clothed!

The letter was written, and the answer came. It earnestly entreated Huberta not to take the step she proposed, assuring her that he conceived it would be extremely disadvantageous to the future interests of both, and delicately, but very distinctly, hinting that should assistance be wanting, she need apply to no other friend than himself. Perhaps Huberta was wrong in feeling that this matter of fact, but very affectionate epistle, increased her sorrows; but certain it is, that she did feel it, and that the idea of applying to the charity (as she miscalled it) of her lover, gave her perhaps the bitterest pang she had ever felt. She showed the letter to her father and mother, however, and thenceforth escaped all further importunity on the subject of the place and the pupils. And then followed a new page in the history of Huberta. Every thought was now turned

to the possibility of saving from their present income what might enable them to eke out what would remain after her father's death, in such a manner as to support existence till—till another change should come—till she should die, perhaps, or till—oh! the immeasurable distance of that possible future! till Henry should get a living from his college, and be able to marry her.

In this project she met with no opposition from either father or mother. The gentle-spirited old man, despite his own predictions, continued to live on, but he could no longer leave his room, and as every want was supplied as usual, he was wholly unconscious of the change that was taking place in his household. Neither did her mother offer any opposition to her plans. The good little woman's health was failing; her mother had died early, and there certainly seemed to be every likelihood that she would follow her example. Having arranged the best bedroom (that over the little parlour) with all the little comforts she could think of for her old husband, she gradually began to feel that she never was so much at ease in any other place herself; so that the rest of the little mansion was solely at the disposition of Huberta.

Her first reform was dismissing their servant, and this she did, performing all her duties in a manner that prevented her absence from being any loss to her parents. But this could not be done in conjunction with her daily duties in the organ-loft, without a degree of persevering industry that kept her literally hard at work from morning to night. But where everything goes on quietly, people who are incessantly waited upon are very apt to forget how much time and labour is bestowed upon them. Hubert Oldbury and his wife little guessed that Huberta often sat up half the night to repair their clothes, or in washing and ironing them; still less did they imagine that the comfortable economy which had formerly supplied the family table, was now changed into a system of such rigid abstinence on the part of Huberta, as seriously to impair her health. But her little hoard very perceptibly increased; and the assurance that she should not be obliged to ask Henry for money whereby

to live, seemed to console her for everything. And thus wore away two other years.

But not all the labour, not all the privation those years brought, could be compared in suffering to the dreadful disappointment of not seeing Henry during the course of them. An offer, advantageous, in every way, of travelling for two years with a pupil, had induced him to submit to this melancholy privation; and when the letter came which announced this to Huberta, together with the confession that he could not afford the expense of a journey that would allow him only one day to pass with her, she had not the consolation of knowing that his own heart was wrung by it, and that it was endured only that the little hoard that he too was making, in order to meet her wants when she should lose her father, should not be reduced by the indulgence.

Quietness and peace are not the same; nay, in many cases I suspect that they are as little allied as riot and enjoyment. Could unbroken quiet have sufficed to the happiness of Huberta, she might have accounted herself the most happy creature alive; for never did time flow on with so little variety as with her.

When Henry had been gone rather more than a year, Mrs. Oldbury died, and this event, from the nature of the departed individual, produced as little change as it was possible such an event could do. A few words that she uttered, however, not many weeks before she died, did leave a deep impression on the mind of her daughter. Huberta was seated beside her bed, with the light full upon her face, while the eyes of her sick mother were earnestly fixed upon her.

"Huberta, my dear," said Mrs. Oldbury, who at that time was quite as well as she had been for many months before — "Huberta, my dear," said she, "you certainly are nothing like so pretty as you used to be. How old are you, my dear child?"

"Twenty-seven, mother," was the reply.

"Yes, to be sure, and so you are, dear. Only to think of it, Huberta! Why I was just ten years younger than you are when I married. But it won't be much matter for you, I suppose, because you have got a husband

provided; but it is a pity that beauty should go so soon, isn't it?"

At length, the long-expected letter came from Henry, announcing his return to England, and promising to see them soon;—and then he came—and his eye fixed itself steadily on the pale cheek of Huberta. How freshly did she remember then her poor mother's words, and how well she felt that she understood that look!

In general, the visits of Henry to the bay-windowed parlour were always made in the afternoon; but on the day following his arrival at ——, he had something to say to Huberta, which brought him to the house when the poor young woman was in the sort of deshabille which domestic offices, when performed by one pair of hands, render inevitable.

It is not very common to see in one of humble birth a figure so strikingly graceful as that of Henry, when, with the chartered freedom of old acquaintance, he lifted the latch of the house-door, and passed on to the kitchen, looking in vain into the little parlour as he went. Still less common is it to see such a being as Huberta, so very humbly attired, and so very humbly employed as he found her. Her delicate face became, for one moment, as red as scarlet, and in the next as pale as virgin snow. She seemed not certainly very greatly delighted to see him, and tears, of which she was herself hardly conscious, fell fast upon her cheeks.

Again, Henry's fine eyes were earnestly fixed upon those pallid cheeks, and then he suddenly took his leave, saying, that he found his visit was ill-timed, and had distressed her. She had no heart to bid him stay; besides, she knew that he would come again in the afternoon, and then she would try to look less miserable. But the afternoon passed away, and he came not; the next day followed, and he did not come near her; and on the next, she received the following note from him:—

"Forgive my leaving you so abruptly. I have at this moment too much to do, even to talk to you, my dear Huberta. Nor can I see you again before I return to Oxford. But to prove to you that I have not forgotten your wishes, I have spent the morning in canvassing for

your appointment to your father's place, and happy am I to tell you that I have succeeded. You are already, dear Huberta, the appointed organist of —— cathedral."

Huberta read this note without shedding a tear, and yet she felt that it was the last she should ever receive from her lover. And she was right. It was the last.

It is savage to lift the veil from before such suffering as that of Huberta. She complained to no one — she scarcely murmured an expression of misery to herself. Then why expose the sorrow that she held sacred? Her life moved on as usual, save that she replied not to this last letter of Henry. For this she felt that she had not sufficient strength, but for all other duties, they were performed as faithfully as before.

It was one day short of a week from this event that Huberta, having smoothed her father's pillow for the night, was sitting alone beside a very feeble lamp in the little parlour, when she heard the house-door open, and a hasty step approach. She was in no mood to feel terror at anything; she scarcely started, but raised her eyes to see who was thus intruding on her too careless security.

Might she believe her eyes? Was it indeed Henry? Yes, it was Henry — Henry, no longer Fellow of —— College; no longer the prosperous tutor of many pupils, but an almost destitute young man, who dared to hope that she would immediately marry him, though he must throw himself as a burden upon her little income; his best hope being that he might obtain the office of teacher to the cathedral singing-boys!

Did Huberta receive her poor, destitute lover harshly? Did she reproach him with his imprudence? Or did she accept him with such a fulness of unhoped-for happiness as only those who have sorrowed, as she had sorrowed, can feel?

Nothing would satisfy the venerable organist but the being carried into the cathedral to witness the wedding, and give away his daughter. And I take it upon myself to assure my gentle readers, that the little bay-windowed parlour behind the Lady Chapel of —— Cathedral, was

that day the scene of a *festin de marriage*, the happiness of which equalled that of the very happiest that ever was celebrated in the world.

* * * * * *

It matters very little, but, for the satisfaction of the curious, I will add, that Henry Morley suffered not in his worldly fortunes so much as some folks may think he ought to have done, by this exceedingly abrupt proceeding. He had done his duty by many pupils, and one among them did his duty to him in return; so that he is now, as I understand, in very easy circumstances; and moreover, I am assured by a person who paid them a visit just ten years after this marriage, that Huberta was then one of the very loveliest women of her age that the proud eye of a happy husband ever looked upon.

The Butt.

"Nature has many such."

"It is singular," said William Morton to his friend and fellow-collegian, Charles Wilmot, "to see such a family as the Belmonts. Amongst them all there is not one—no, not a single one—male or female, that is not essentially witty."

"I think I should be afraid of them," replied his friend. "Wit so often shows itself in satire, that it is sometimes dangerous to come near it."

"That is not the case with the Belmonts," said Morton. "They are, without exception, the best-tempered set of people I ever came near. Their conversation is one perpetual flow of good-humoured pleasantry—no biting, carping, discontented harshness among them. And then they are all so handsome! Upon my honour, I never saw such a set of people in my life."

"All handsome? Father, mother, sons, and daughters?" demanded Wilmot.

"Yes," returned the other, after a pause. "Father, mother, sons, and daughters—all handsome. I do not exactly mean that Mrs. Belmont's eyes are as bright as her daughter Fanny's, or that the gentlemanly-looking old man, her husband, is as striking in appearance as his son William; but Mrs. Belmont is particularly well-looking for a middle-aged woman, and Mr. Belmont is exactly the sort of person I should like to be myself, if I live to be as old. In short, I tell you that it is a very singular thing to meet with such a family."

"I wish you joy of your good luck, Morton," returned Charles Wilmot. "It will make your first season of real

liberty in London pass very pleasantly—provided always that you do not fall so seriously in love with either mother or daughters as to make your heart ache."

"Mother! Nonsense! And as to the daughters, I see no reason in the world why I should not fall in love with either of them. Only that I don't think I should be ever able to decide which."

"There is always safety in numbers," replied Charles. "But you have quite forgotten that I came here to drive you to the Park. Are you still sufficiently your own master to go there? Or will it be necessary to ask the Belmont family if they can spare you?"

"If I thought they would answer '*No*,' I would ask them directly," said Morton. "But how can you be such a fool, Charles, as to let me talk of them to you as I have done, over and over again, and yet never ask me to introduce you? You are either too proud, I suppose, to ask a favour of your friend, or else you are thinking of Highfield Park, and its dependencies, and are afraid of being caught. But you are quite mistaken if you fancy that the Belmonts are fortune-hunting misses. You would see in a moment, if you knew them, that they are quite in another line. They all seem to enjoy the present too keenly, charming creatures! to trouble themselves much about the future. Why do you not wish to be introduced to them?"

"I have not said that I do not wish it, Morton," replied Charles.

"But will you tell me with proper emphasis and accent that you do?" demanded Morton.

"You are very *exigeant*, my good friend," returned the other, laughing. "I never saw you so difficult before."

"I am not *exigeant* for myself, but for my charming friends," he replied. "I am such a good-natured fool, Wilmot, that I cannot endure to think of what you lose by not knowing them; and yet I don't quite like, either, going about begging young men to be introduced to them."

"Well!" replied Wilmot, "I will satisfy you if I can. Will you do me the honour of introducing me to your friends the Belmonts?"

"Yes, Mr. Wilmot, I will," returned Morton, "and the deed shall be done at once. Instead of taking me to the Park, let us immediately drive to Bolton Street."

"Agreed!" was the reply; and in a few minutes the two young men were ushered into a handsome drawing-room, in which was seated a lady of some forty-five or fifty years of age, surrounded by four younger ones.

William Morton had not exaggerated the facts, when he said that the Belmonts were a handsome race. They really were very handsome. The mother was a tall, well-made woman, with regular features, fine eyes, and a natural residue of a fine complexion, that had had neither illness, sorrow, intemperate dissipation, nor an intemperate table to convert it into either yellow or purple.

Of the girls, the eldest was very like the mother, only not quite so tall. The second was rather less regularly handsome, but was favoured by nature with a pair of peculiarly fine eyes, the sparkling brightness of which lighted up her whole countenance, and caused her to be often accounted the most attractive of the family, though perhaps the least beautiful in feature. The third, however, was by many considered as the beauty *par excellence*, on account of her lovely complexion, which really did approach as nearly to roses and lilies in its exquisitely blended tints, as it is well possible to imagine. The fourth young lady was seated apart from the rest, and her dress, though delicately neat, had not that pretty, well-appointed finish which marks the morning toilet of an English young lady of fashion, when seated in a drawing-room, ready to receive morning visitors. She was a pretty, delicate-looking girl, and might have been observed, by any one who happened to take the trouble of looking at her, to be rather remarkable for the perfectly faultless symmetry of her form. But she was too unobtrusive and quiet-looking to attract much attention; she was not a daughter of the Belmont family, only a niece, and her name was Mary Bell.

"Ah! our good friend Morton!" exclaimed Mrs. Belmont; "I am delighted to see you! We were just planning a hundred and fifty things in which you are to be concerned."

Mr. Morton bowed and smiled, and when the lady paused, said—

"Will you permit me, Mrs. Belmont, to present my friend, Mr. Wilmot, to you? I would not ask this favour for him, did I not know him to be deserving of it."

"I am happy to see you, Mr. Wilmot: my three daughters, Mr. Wilmot. I fear that Mr. Belmont is not at home, but he will hope to see you at some future time; and *à propos* of other times, do tell me, Mr. Morton, if your friend is a *charade* man? You must know that my girls have caught a charade fever from the Sommertons, and I see plainly that I shall have no rest till I get up something of the kind here."

"I answer for no man upon such occasions," replied Mr. Morton.

"Will you answer for yourself?" exclaimed the animated Fanny, Mrs. Belmont's second daughter.

"Assuredly," replied Morton. "In this, as in everything else, I can answer in all sincerity that—'I will, in all my best, obey you, madam.'"

"And *your* answer, Mr. Wilmot?" said the mother, with a glance almost as lively as that of the daughter.

"The echo of my friend's answer shall be mine," replied the young man.

"Bravissimo! Now then, Charlotte," said Mrs. Belmont, addressing her eldest daughter, "I think you may begin your operations; we can manage to furnish the female part of the troop ourselves, *faute de mieux*, and our boys, with the aid of these two gentlemen, will make us quite strong enough to begin. We can go on raising recruits as we may find it convenient afterwards."

"We must positively have a *père noble* secured before we set off," said Margaret, the youngest of the Belmont graces; "for papa declares he shall put us all out if he attempted to play, and the character, you know, is wanted perpetually."

"That is quite true, Corinna," replied Charlotte; "but you would not let the whole thing fall to the ground for want of a *père noble*, would you?"

"Good Heaven! No!" exclaimed Fanny, with a degree of earnestness that showed her heart was in the

business. Then casting a beam from her refulgent eyes upon the shady distant spot where her cousin was sitting, she said, with a little air of drollery which became her infinitely, "Could not Mary Bell do the part of *père noble?*"

Of course every eye was turned on Mary Bell, but it was difficult to ascertain whether she had herself heard the sally; for the more than quietness, the deep stillness of her features was not disturbed by it. Whether her eyes, had they been visible, would have shown whether she heard or not, it is impossible to say, for they were fixed on the needlework with which she was engaged, and only benefited her needle. But every other eye spoke mirth, and on every other lip there was a smile; for in truth there was a comical sort of incongruity in the bright-eyed Fanny's proposition, which it seemed difficult to receive with gravity.

"If you can persuade her to try it, our troop will gain immensely!" cried Margaret, the roses and lilies dimpling into a thousand smiles.

"We must try what soft persuasion will effect," said Charlotte, with a sort of comic gravity that the family seemed to relish excessively; for though not loudly or boisterously in any way, the mother and her three daughters all appeared to be nearly convulsed with stifled laughter. Mrs. Belmont concealed her face as much as her pocket-handkerchief could do it, but not so effectually but that what was going on behind it might be perceived. Charlotte clasped her hands together, then stretched her arms upon the table, and concealed her fair face upon them. Fanny looked round her with an air of solemn gravity in every feature, save her eyes, but they laughed, oh! they laughed with an intensity of merriment that it would have been difficult to withstand; and Margaret, who, like her mother, employed her pocket-handkerchief in concealing her face, began at length to weep from excess of laughter, for she removed the cambric from the lower part of her face, and appeared to be wiping tears from her eyes.

William Morton looked from one to the other, evidently puzzled to understand the cause of their mirth;

but then, with the feeling of a young man who does not like to be left out of a joke so very generally enjoyed, and evidently so very good, he determined that he would share it, and accordingly he got up, stepped briskly up to the window, appeared to wish for concealment, and then turned round with enough of the remnant of a laugh on his countenance to make it very evident that he had enjoyed the jest as much as the Belmont family themselves, which they all seemed to observe and appreciate as a proof both of wit and good fellowship, for they all exchanged most intelligent glances with him, and he felt, with the very greatest satisfaction, that he was growing more intimate with them every day.

As to Charles Wilmot, he sat by, almost as quietly as Mary Bell herself; for, feeling that any attempt to understand what was going on must be useless, he made none, and screwed his courage to the endurance of being "*left out;*" endeavouring to look as much at his ease as he could, and, as he was not a shy man, he succeeded tolerably well, being able, in the course of a few seconds, to direct his attention to his companion in gravity, and became convinced, before the laughing pantomime was over, that she was very nearly, if not quite, as pretty as the prettiest of her young companions, notwithstanding her immovable stillness, and the disagreeable fact that, for all purposes of being looked at, she was as effectually without eyes as a statue; for though he had turned as many glances towards her since he entered the room as was at all consistent with politeness, he really had not as yet ascertained whether she had any eyes or not. That she had eyelids and eyelashes he was quite aware, and if any eyelids and eyelashes could have satisfied a man in the absence of the living lights to which they belonged, he might have been satisfied; but nevertheless, he was not; and was still looking so earnestly at her, in the hope of getting a peep at what was thus pertinaciously concealed, as quite to have forgotten all the mysterious mirth that was going on, when Mrs. Belmont appeared suddenly to recollect him, and exclaimed—

"Pray, Mr. Wilmot, do not think us such idiots as we appear to be. I feel exceedingly inclined to say to you,

'Je ne suis pas si bête que j'ai l'air.' When you know us better, you will discover that it is absolutely impossible to exist in the presence of my absurd girls without being eternally moved to unseasonable mirth by some ridiculous sally or other. As to that atrocious Fanny, with her horrible eyes, she is worse than all the rest; and I do assure you, I often tell her she will be the death of me. But the unprincipled little wretch goes on without paying the slightest attention to my remonstrances, and how long my existence will be spared, Heaven knows! You may perceive that your poor friend is already become a victim!"

Upon hearing these words, the three Miss Belmonts renewed their demonstrations of joyous ecstasy, without even affecting any restraint, the first uttering a musical sort of little shriek, inexpressibly comic, the second prettily mimicking the applause of a theatre by tapping an open volume which lay on the table with her knitting needle, and the third laughing heartily, *sans façon*, but so elegantly *sotto voce*, as to avoid the slightest approximation to being noisy. No family, perhaps, ever laughed so much, with so little noise, as the Belmonts.

"Do be quiet, you vile children!" resumed Mrs. Belmont, "or I give up the charade scheme altogether."

These words caused the three pretty, playful creatures to place themselves, with an air of exaggerated precision, each with her hands before her, and each with her pretty mouth contracted into half its natural dimensions, in order to convince their mamma of their sedateness.

"Now you look like good children," said Mrs. Belmont, bending her head with an air of solemn approval, which caused a slight convulsive movement to agitate the features of the "three grave Graces," as their fond father delighted to call them; but it was speedily conquered, and their mother went on to explain to the new recruits the various duties that would be required of them.

The young men listened with great attention, and then assured her that they should hold themselves in readiness to enter upon whatever particular tasks should be assigned them, at the shortest possible notice.

"Oh, when shall we begin, mamma?—when shall we have the first?" demanded Fanny, eagerly.

"Why, you know, my dear," replied Mrs. Belmont, "that I cannot get people together in the height of the London season by holding up my finger to them. If we wish the rooms to be filled, we must send the invitations a month beforehand, at the very least."

"That is perfectly true," said Charlotte; "but is it not a horrid bore to wait so long?"

As she turned her head towards Wilmot as she spoke, he replied to her question by observing that at any rate there must be a great deal of practising before they should feel ready to perform before full rooms.

This suggestion was hailed with great applause, and Fanny, looking at him with indescribable archness, said—

"I am by no means certain that the practising may not prove the best part of the business."

Charles Wilmot smiled, and nodded as cordial an assent to this as if he had been an *habitué* of six months' standing; and as he looked at her, he acknowledged to himself that Morton was right, and that there was an immense deal of beauty in the Belmont family.

Just at this moment the door opened, and two handsome, gay-looking young men entered, so like each other that they might almost have been taken for twins.

"Bravo!" cried Charlotte, "here comes William the Conqueror, and at his heels our dauntless Richard the Lion-hearted. Now we shall get on, you will see."

And then, Mr. Wilmot having been properly brought forward as a new acquaintance, the two brothers were as quickly made acquainted with all that had been decided upon respecting the charades, as it was possible for four ladies, all speaking together, to make them.

"Capital, by Jove!" exclaimed the Conqueror.

"I am devilish glad you are going about it in earnest," said Richard, "for it is exactly the sort of thing to suit us. And now, mother, if you please, we must examine the *locale* a little. Exits and entrances cannot be made in the same style that the butler and footmen walk in and out. We shall probably find it necessary to take off that door and substitute a curtain, and it will be desirable also

to have some light sort of frame-work made on the opposite side of the room, covered with canvas, or another curtain, or, in fact, anything you will, provided it conceals a space large enough to permit an exit on that side as well as on the other. It will be utterly impossible for all the characters to come and go, for ever and for ever, on the same side."

"Most assuredly it will," replied his mother. "But if we mean to do the thing well, or in other words, Richard, if the governor enters into it with sufficient spirit to permit a little expense, we ought to have a curtain across the stage; and in that case I should have it hung across our immense folding-doors, and give up the back-drawing-room to the performers, leaving only enough space in front for a prettily-decorated stage, with a background of festooned drapery, blended with flowers, or statues, or something of that sort—but no lights, observe—not a single lamp or candle must be behind the performers. A strong light, concealed from the spectators, must be placed within the folding-doors, and this, with a row of good foot-lamps, also concealed from the company, will be quite sufficient."

While Mrs. Belmont was thus discussing the preliminaries with her younger son, the elder was in the hands of his sisters, who, leaning over him as he sat, appeared to be all talking to him together, but the narrative they were giving was uttered in too low a tone to be heard by any one but himself; but to him, at least, it appeared to be sufficiently intelligible, for it almost convulsed him with laughter, which at length became sufficiently remarkable to attract the attention of Mrs. Belmont.

"What are you about, children?" she exclaimed. "A very pretty welcome you are giving to Mr. Morton and his friend! They are really too silly for anything! Do you come here, Mr. Wilmot, and you too, dear Mr. Morton—come and help me form a committee of ways and means."

On receiving this summons the two young men eagerly rose and approached her, while at the same moment the eldest son and her three daughters bounded with the graceful lightness of a group of fawns from the spot they occupied, and immediately surrounded her.

This general and very animated movement made the unbroken stillness of Mary Bell so remarkable, that young Wilmot involuntarily stopped short, as he passed before the isolated little work-table at which she was sitting, and stood aside, as if to let her pass on before him. But she either saw not or heeded not, or would not seem to heed the attention, for she neither moved her head, nor raised her eyes, but continued her work as steadily as if she had been sitting alone. The action of Mr. Wilmot, trifling as it was, sufficed to draw the eyes of the whole party upon him, for it had caused a pause in Mrs. Belmont's eloquence.

"Have you set your heart upon enlisting Mary Bell as one of our performers, Mr. Wilmot?" said William Belmont, stepping towards him.

"If you would do me the favour of introducing me to the young lady," returned Wilmot, "I should be very happy to enlist her if it were possible."

"If," repeated William Belmont, laughing. "However, I know no reason in nature why you should not try. *Allons!* let us make the attempt at once." Then raising his voice, he added, "Ladies and gentlemen, our friend Mr. Wilmot is about to undertake a difficult and somewhat thorny enterprise, in which I think we all ought to support him—'*à moi, mes Belges!*'"

At this cry, the whole family rallied round him, Mrs. Belmont herself being of the number, though she arrived not with the first rush that brought his sisters and brothers to his side, but followed with a graceful matronly step, a pleasant smile upon her lip, and something more merry still in the twinkle of her eye.

"Now, then!" exclaimed the Conqueror, "now for the introduction! Miss Mary Bell, permit me, at his own particular request, to present to you Mr. Charles Wilmot, a young gentleman who is extremely anxious, not only to cultivate your acquaintance, but your talents also."

This was followed by half a moment of immovable stillness on the part of Mary Bell, and by a silence, like that of suspended breath, from those around her. And then the young girl half rose from her seat, and made a slight bow, graceful enough as to the movement, but rather on

the shady side of civility in manner, for she not only did not look at the person thus presented to her, but never for an instant raised her eyes from the ground. Having made this salutation, however, such as it was, she resumed her seat, and continued her occupation. And then, on looking round him, as if to learn what was to be done next, Charles Wilmot perceived that the family were again in ecstacies of laughter, but still it was very quiet laughter, and by the ear alone it could scarcely have been discerned at all. But two of the sisters might be seen arm-in-arm, leaning against each other, as if in need of mutual support under the vehemence of titillation that shook their limbs, while the hand of the third was clasped in that of her younger brother, who was biting his under lip as if he would have severed it, to prevent the explosion of mirth that seemed to threaten him. Mrs. Belmont stood by with an aspect of extreme enjoyment; too much mistress of herself to fear uttering any sound she could disapprove, but as greatly amused by watching the agonies of her shy niece as the youngest among her lively children could be.

"Cousin Mary Bell! this will never do!" said William Belmont. "You have not been greatly accustomed to the fashionable world, we all know, inasmuch as my ever respected maternal uncle, your inestimable nautical father, has hitherto deemed it desirable to lay you up in dock, where no eye but his own, I believe, was permitted to superintend the growth of your juvenile timbers. But now, Cousin Mary Bell, that the marine paternity has departed upon a cruise to China, and that my respected maternity has extended the right hand of good auntship towards you for the purpose of introducing you to the *beau monde*, I do strongly recommend that you should speak when you are spoken to, and look up when gentlemen, or ladies either, are brought to your footstool in order to be introduced to your acquaintance."

Mary Bell then looked up, and her lips too moved, though what they spoke was inaudible; and again she rose from her chair, and raising her eyes for half an instant to the face of Mr. Wilmot, she repeated her bow, and then sat down again, permitting her attention to fix itself once

more upon the work it had seemed to quit so unwillingly; but her cheek, which had usually more of the lily than the rose in it, became, as she made this great exertion, almost as brightly pink as that of her cousin Margaret.

"The conquering William is a conqueror still, you see," said Mrs. Belmont, as she looked at the delicate loveliness of her timid niece, with less of pleasure, as it seemed, than of surprise. "Is he not an extraordinary creature?" she added, turning suddenly round to Mr. Morton, who stood near her.

"He is a Belmont all over," exclaimed Morton with animation.

"Isn't he?" she replied. "Not that all who bear the name have his power," she added, after meditating for a moment. "I am convinced that I might have preached for an hour to that obstinate little fool of a girl, before I could have obtained as much compliance from her as she has just shown to him. You have no idea what a plague she is!"

"Perhaps the Conqueror does not think so," said Morton. "Perhaps her coldness and reserve do not suffice to conceal from him the beautiful form, the soft beseeching eye, and the lovely delicacy of her whole appearance. Perhaps the Conqueror may himself be in danger of being conquered!"

"Good heaven! Mr. Morton, what nonsense! I beg your pardon a thousand times; but, upon my honour, I never heard anything so absurd as the notion of such a man as William Belmont finding anything to admire in poor miserable-looking little Mary Bell. But I dare say you were only speaking in jest?"

"Most assuredly I was," replied the young man, colouring naturally, and laughing affectedly; "I cannot think how you could imagine I was in earnest."

"Oh, no! I did not really think so," returned Mrs. Belmont, laying her hand with renewed kindness on the arm of her favourite new acquaintance, who, as she justly thought, admired her family, and herself into the bargain, *almost* as much as they deserved; "but I chose to scold you a little, only for making a jest upon such a subject. Only just look at him, my dear friend! Certainly no man

ever lived who understood the art of quizzing so well as William does."

The time occupied by this little *à part* between Mrs. Belmont and Mr. Morton, had been occupied by the group assembled round Mary Bell in staring at her in silent surprise. It was a received fact throughout the Belmont family, that Mary Bell was a plain, unformed, dull-spirited, and utterly stupid little girl, whose visit for a stipulated three months was the very greatest bore and misfortune that had ever fallen upon them, and which could be atoned for only by their finding in her queer, awkward ways, unceasing employment for the lively vein which so charmingly prevailed among them. But when she looked up as she made her second bow to Mr. Wilmot, there was so much of undeniable beauty and grace in her appearance, that the three sisters and the two brothers all looked at her with astonishment. But the Conquerer soon recovered himself, and, perfectly guiltless of any feeling that could at all justify the imprudent hint of Mr. Morton, he proceeded to furnish the quota of amusement which he knew was expected from him by his mother and sisters, at the expense of Mary Bell. Nay, so admirably and so Belmontishly clever was he, that even this unexpected display of loveliness was turned to account, and suggested a pun that long contributed to enrich the fund of wit from which he drew his brilliant *persiflage*.

"Upon my word, fair cousin, bowing and blushing becomes you so greatly, that they make you perfectly beautiful; wherefore henceforth, instead of calling you Mary Bell, you must permit me to address you as *belle Marie*. But think not that we can any longer suffer you to devote yourself so exclusively to the labours of the needle as you have hitherto done since we have enjoyed the sunshine of your presence among us. We have this instant seen, *belle Marie*, what you *can* do in the way of being beautiful when you choose it; so now, fair cousin, be pleased to listen to the petition of this gentleman, that you join yourself to our troop of charade players."

"Delightful! oh, delightful!" cried the elder Miss Belmont.

"Cousin Mary, I will give you anything you will ask, if you will only act in a charade," said the second.

"Oh, would it not be rich?" exclaimed the third.

"Just think!—obliged to move about—obliged to look up—obliged to invent something to say! Oh, would it not be rich? Mary Bell, if you will only consent to act in one single scene of a charade, I will promise not to ask you any question across the dinner-table, when we have company, for a month to come. Tell me that you will act, dear, dear Mary Bell, only for one scene!"

"For one scene!" said Mrs. Belmont, in a voice of authority. "I beg, Margaret, that you will not lead your cousin to believe that she is to be let off at the end of one scene. With all the trouble I am going to take for the amusement of you all, it will be strange indeed if the members of my own family refuse to assist me. But we need not talk any more about it at present. My task, I suspect, will be the most difficult, and I must perform it before anything else is begun: and now let us adjourn. You shall hear the result of my petitioning to my lord and master as soon as I know it myself," she added, addressing the young men she had enlisted with a confidential smile; "and if that part of the business goes well, of which I confess I have very little doubt, I flatter myself we shall encounter no further difficulty. I certainly do not mean to anticipate any from rebellion in the household."

These last words were spoken a little *sotto voce*, and the very slightest glance in the world directed towards Mary Bell, whose short-lived roses had given place to more than usual paleness, interpreted their meaning. But anything they might seem to contain in any degree approaching harshness, was softened by so charming a smile, that had Mary Bell happened to see it, she must have felt persuaded that her aunt really was one of the sweetest-tempered women in the world.

"Now, then, we will finish our unmercifully long visit," said Mr. Morton, "and shall live upon the hope of hearing from you."

The two young men then took their leave, and were

presently dashing along in the well-hung cab of Wilmot towards Hyde Park.

* * * * * *

"Well, Charles, what do you think of the Belmonts?" said Morton, the moment after they had driven from the door.

"I think," replied Wilmot, "that they certainly are one of the handsomest families I ever saw."

"I knew you must think that," returned his friend. "But what do you think of their manners, of their conversation, of their whole style? Did you ever see anything so animated, so lively, so thoroughly fascinating and delightful? And the sons, too! Are they not fine-looking young fellows?"

"Yes, they are altogether a remarkably handsome family. But I wish you would tell me something about that pretty pale creature that they call Mary Bell. Who, and what is she?"

"She is a niece of Mrs. Belmont's. Did not you hear them say so?"

"Yes; but I want to know something more about her. I presume that she is poor and dependent."

"Oh, dear no, I fancy not! Her father is a captain in the navy, and as she is his only child, she is scarcely likely to be what is called poor and dependent. What makes you think she is so?"

"I don't know exactly," replied Wilmot, musingly. "I suppose it is their manner of treating her."

"There, now! I will be hanged if I did not think so," exclaimed Morton, indignantly. "Now, is not that speech, Wilmot, a beautiful specimen of the justice and liberality of human beings in judging of each other? Now, just listen to a plain statement of facts, and then pass judgment on yourself. Here are the Belmont family, such as you see them, rich, well-born, and fashionable; as beautiful as angels, and every one of them full of talent and *pétillant d'esprit;* in short, a set of people in the fullest enjoyment of all the goods the gods can send. Now, it is notorious to every one who knows anything about the matter, that where there is a

family of daughters to be taken out, there can be no greater bore than having another young lady by way of a visitor. But this dull little girl's father goes off upon a long cruise, and what does Mrs. Belmont do? In the very height of the London season, when every inch in a carriage, or an opera-box, is of inestimable value, she sends off an invitation to this very stupidest of nieces, and whom, by the way, she perfectly well knew to be such, to pass three months with her. And what has been her reward? It is rarely that any day has passed since she arrived without my spending some part of it with them; and, I declare to Heaven, I have never once seen her smile since she entered the house."

"But may not that be owing, Morton, to her not feeling happy and at ease among them? It is evident that *persiflage* and quizzing are among the most favourite of the Belmont pastimes; and, do you know, I think it very likely it may make her feel uncomfortable," returned Wilmot.

"Nonsense, Charles Wilmot! If she really feel thus gloomily discontented at the sight and sound of innocent playfulness, she certainly must be one of the most thoroughly unamiable people in existence, and the sooner she is cured of such a temper the better for her."

"And do you think the best way to cure her will be persevering in the lively mode of treatment administered to her this morning?" demanded Wilmot.

"Certainly. It is not only the best, but the only way," replied his friend. "Did you not perceive that William Belmont's good-humoured *badinage* did at last make her rouse herself and look up?"

"Why certainly, Morton, she ought to be obliged to him for that; for it caused her, for the moment at least, to look a thousand times lovelier than the very handsomest of her cousins. Yet, in my life, I never saw an eye expressive of so much gentle sadness. I am quite sure she is miserable."

"Then I am quite sure it is her own fault," replied Morton. "They are all as kind to her as possible, and I know perfectly well that she might have gone to fifty parties since she has been there, if she had not obsti-

nately persisted in declaring that she preferred staying at home. It is impossible to force her to be amused and happy if she has pre-determined that she will not be so."

"That is very true, certainly. But it is painful to see it, nevertheless," said Wilmot.

"To be sure it is," answered his companion. "It is the greatest bore upon earth. All the Belmonts feel it, I assure you; and nothing but their charming, happy tempers could enable them to bear it as they do."

* * * * * *

The next day but one brought the following note from Mrs. Belmont to Mr. Morton:—

"*Tout va bien.* All difficulties have been conquered, and I have received *carte blanche* to do everything I like. What a blessing it is to have to deal with such a temper as Mr. Belmont's! We are excessively busy, as you may suppose, and we want you and your friend to come and take your luncheon here at two precisely. I have ordered the door to be *défendue* against every one else, and the coachman not to come near the house till half-past five, so that we shall have three hours good to decide upon words, costumes, and scenery. Of course, you will say everything you can think of to induce your friend to forgive and obey this hasty summons. My silly children are absolutely wild with delight.

"Yours very sincerely,

"CHARLOTTE BELMONT, the Elder."

This very agreeable summons was immediately communicated to Mr. Wilmot, who was exceedingly well pleased to receive it. He was an admirable charade-player, and, like the majority of his fellow-creatures, he took pleasure in doing what he was conscious he did well. The punctuality with which the friends knocked at Mr. Belmont's door precisely as the clock struck two, was quite exemplary, as was also that with which the whole family were seen hurrying down stairs to the dining-room as they entered, in order that not

a moment might be lost by idle drawing-room preliminaries.

Mary Bell was among the very first who appeared, but she was driven down the stairs by those who followed, with the same movement of their pretty fancy aprons, as they would have used if driving a flock of geese before them; not to mention that the two long-legged sons of the family were following also, with shouting assurances that, if she did not make haste, they would be upon her head; so it was with a quick, light step, that she bounded to the bottom of the flight; and Mr. Wilmot, as he greeted her with a gentle "Good morning, Miss Bell," had again the pleasure of seeing her beautiful eyes raised, and a blush upon her cheek, wonderfully resembling that of the wild rose.

In the dining-parlour they found both Mr. and Mrs. Belmont, and the former was immediately introduced to Mr. Wilmot, as the dear, good man, who had licensed the revels that they were about to celebrate. Mr. Belmont was the comely prototype of his comely race. He was several years older than his wife, but it would have been difficult to find a handsomer man of sixty-four. His air, too, was as *gai et gaillard* as that of his sons, and his eye still laughed, and his well-formed mouth still smiled like theirs. Nothing could be more cordial and more kind than the welcome he gave to the new acquaintance thus presented to him.

"I am happy to see so promising a recruit added to Mrs. Belmont's troop," he said; "I like to patronize all these innocent joys, Mr. Wilmot. The argument which perpetually suggests itself in their favour whenever the subject is brought before me, is briefly this—Shall we ever be younger? If not, sir, if not, let us, in the name of common sense, catch the bright fleeting moments as they pass, and enjoy as much of frolic and of jest as the mercy of Providence shall be pleased to put within our reach."

And as he spoke, the excellent gentleman seated himself at the well-spread table, and helping himself plenteously to some scolloped oysters, made it speedily evident that his grateful welcome of the gifts of Providence was not confined to matters of jest alone.

Excellent as it was, the luncheon was not permitted to last long, for the younger part of the company soon betrayed their impatience to get it over, that they might return to the drawing-room, and set about the business that was before them without further delay. And now again Mr. Belmont displayed an amiable trait of character; far from reproving the vehement eagerness which his lively children betrayed in the hasty and unceremonious manner in which they quitted the table, he only laughed, and drawing his well-stuffed arm-chair a little closer to the board, exclaimed, as he transferred the contents of a small, but very favourite dish to his own plate—

"Away with ye! That's right! The fewer, ye know, the better cheer. And as to the merriment, it will be time enough to look after that when I have taken a glass of sherry."

"What a heavenly temper!" said Mrs. Belmont to Mr. Morton, as they left the room.

The happy troop had no sooner reached the drawing-room, than Fanny exclaimed—

"Now for it, then! Words—words—words! Let everybody take a pencil and write down three words. Mamma says that each charade must be made as scenic, as perfectly dramatized, and as long as possible; and therefore that three will be quite sufficient for one evening. If we each write three words, that will give us twenty-four to choose from, and till this choice is made, mamma says it will be impossible to advance a single inch, for that of course the scenery and *all that* must depend upon it."

Everybody acknowledged the truth of this important proposition by a simultaneous exclamation of—"To be sure!" And the next moment everybody had a bit of writing-paper before them, and either a pencil or a pen in their hand—everybody, save Mary Bell; and she seemed meditating a retreat, for she was very quickly stealing across the floor of the front drawing-room, in the direction of the door.

"Are you looking for a pencil, Miss Bell?" said Wilmot, stepping quickly after her, and offering to put

into her hands the pencil and paper he had prepared for himself—once again he caught a full view of her large melancholy eyes as she raised them to his face.

"Oh, no," she replied, softly, but quite audibly; "you will have more words, without my help, than you can want. I am very much obliged to you."

And Mary Bell was again moving on towards the door, with a step so rapid, notwithstanding its gliding quietness, that she had almost reached it before Wilmot had recovered from his surprise at perceiving how very lovely she was when speaking, and that, exquisite as was her blush, her smile was more exquisite still. But he overtook her ere she had passed through it, and almost involuntarily taking her hand, he said—

"Pray, Miss Bell, do not forsake us! You know that your aunt expects we should all be useful. Do take the pencil!—you shall have your own little table, and nobody shall disturb you."

There was so judicious a mixture of respect and friendliness in the tone and manner of this address, that Mary Bell for a moment lost all her painful shyness, and looking at him with a smile that expressed both surprise and gratitude, she replied—

"I am sure you are very kind! But you do not know how very stupid I am."

"Wilmot answered her only by a laugh, which was quite genuine, for it was impossible to look in the sweet face, beaming with intelligence, which was raised to his, and hear her in so very matter-of-fact a tone talk of her stupidity, without laughing;—but he led her back to the little table which he had seen her occupy, and laying down the pencil and the paper before her, glided away without saying another word, and availing himself without scruple of the free and easy tone which seemed, for the time being, to be established in "the troop," he sought and found another pencil and some more paper, and was presently seated in the midst of the party, in deep meditation on the nature of words. But he was mistaken if he supposed that the little scene in which he had been engaged had passed without witnesses, or in fact, that any one of the persons present, except perhaps

his friend Morton, had suffered a single circumstance of it to escape notice. The amusement which it occasioned was greater than can be easily expressed. That Mary—Mary Bell—should be taken by the hand, led to her chair, and waited upon by the handsomest and most distinguished-looking young man they had seen that season, had something in it so indescribably ludicrous to their feelings, that it was with the very greatest difficulty they avoided laughing aloud.

But they were aware this was not *bon ton*. They knew that Mr. Wilmot was Mr. Wilmot of Highfield Park, and though they had not as yet laid any very deliberate plan for taking possession of himself and his belongings, they were not so childish as to indulge in a laugh at his expense. All they did, therefore, under the pressing necessity of yielding in some degree to the vehement merriment which had seized upon them, was done under cover of a multitude of devices, well known and constantly practised in all such lively families as that of the Belmonts.

One of them was seized with a violent fit of coughing, and blew her nose *con strepito*. Another hid herself completely behind one of her brothers, and relieved herself by pinching his arm with energy. The third knelt down, and pretended to be looking for something on the floor so minute as to render it necessary that her nose should come in contact with the carpet. One of the young men began to whistle with great shrillness, and the other to scold all his sisters at once, *à tort et à travers*, which last device was incomparably the best, as it quickly enabled them to laugh in return, and thus released them from the restraint which they found it so difficult to endure.

But by far the strongest *genuine* feeling produced by this unexpected procedure on the part of Mr. Wilmot was experienced by Mrs. Belmont. She was, as of course she ought to be, considerably more advanced in the science of worldly wisdom than her children, although even on that score there was more talent already developed among them than could reasonably be expected at their age. But Mrs. Belmont, notwithstanding her charming spirits, and the graceful vivacity of her ordinary manners, had a good deal of foresight, and she would have been extremely

well pleased to have seen the admiration which his eyes had already expressed for Fanny, demonstrated by as great assiduity as he had now displayed towards her stupid niece. As to the possibility of Mary Bell's profiting in any way by it, the idea was preposterous. She thought, indeed, that it was more than probable that the young man might be indulging in a little quiet quizzing after his own fashion; but, nevertheless, she would have been better pleased had he shown himself too much occupied by Fanny to think of anything else.

The family burst of merriment being over, they all proceeded to business, and a very pretty picture might have been composed from the group. One fair girl sat with her beautiful eyes raised, in search of inspiration, to the ceiling. Another tapped her snowy forehead with a golden pencil-case; and where was the cynic who, as he watched her, could have dared to quote,

"Knock as you will, there's nobody at home?"

The Conqueror frowned with an intensity that gave a sort of Jove-like air to his countenance, and Richard of the Lion Heart smiled as he meditated on his task, with the air of one who felt at home in his occupation. Mrs. Belmont wrote down two words with great rapidity, but weighed well the responsibility which the task threw upon her before she ventured upon a third. The two visitors did the same; but as to Fanny, who has not yet been mentioned, she was watching Mary Bell so earnestly, that her pencil had not as yet touched her paper. But she could not make her out. For an instant or two she had appeared to be using the pencil that had been put into her hands, but then she laid it aside, resumed her work, and appeared to be again precisely in the same state of abstraction and isolation as usual.

"Well," said Mrs. Belmont, at length, "have we all done?"

"Yes," was uttered like a *feu de joie* by all the voices in succession, for the summons had quickened the tardy so effectually, that no one seemed greatly in arrear.

"Now, then, collect them, William, and read them all aloud, without hinting by any glance or sign from whence they come, and then we will proceed to selection."

This was done precisely as commanded; and then followed the clamour usual on such occasions, each one exclaiming in favour of some particular word, and dilating, *à haute voix*, on the facilities it offered for scenic effect. After this had lasted for some time, it became evident that out of the twenty-seven words (if, indeed, Mary Bell's bit of paper contained any) four were the decided favourites. Of these, two were declared by acclamation to be quite first-rate; but, concerning the other two, there was evidently a difference of opinion. These doubtful words were INCUBUS and INFANTICIDE. Whether William Belmont (the reader) knew whence they came may be doubtful, but certainly no one else did, save their respective authors. Opinions, therefore, were given on all sides, with perfect freedom; and Mrs. Belmont, with a degree of quickness which showed her to be admirably well calculated for the part of manager, ran through the dramatic capabilities of both in a masterly manner, showing how scene might follow scene, and the whole end with splendid effect. But though she declared both words to be very good, she very decidedly gave the preference to *infanticide*, while nearly all the rest of the speakers gave their judgment in favour of the other.

After a pretty stout contest for her own word—for it was, in fact, one of those she had given in—Mrs. Belmont at length yielded to the majority, and *incubus* was decided upon, and then the scraps of paper were spread out upon the table, and every one was desired to select his own, a process resorted to for the purpose of consulting the author as to any former experience he might have had concerning the management of the word. The command was immediately obeyed by every one except Mary Bell, who, as usual, remained stationary at her little table. She had remained so entirely silent during the previous discussion, that it is probable every one, not excepting her new friend, Charles Wilmot, had forgotten that she had been invited to write; but when every one had selected his own, and that one scrap of paper was still found remaining, Wilmot immediately stepped forward, seized upon it, and carried it to her, but not without reading aloud, as he went along, the word INCUBUS.

Mary Bell looked up for an instant as he placed the paper before her, blushed, smiled, bent her head in acknowledgment of his attention, and then once more resumed her occupation.

"*Imaginez!*" cried Fanny, turning to her mother with a look of astonishment.

"*Imaginez*, indeed," responded her mother; "but to me it will be quite a relief to find that the farce of excessive shyness is at an end. There is nothing I detest like it!"

Then crossing the room to the remote spot occupied by her niece, she said—

"I am glad to see, Mary Bell, that you think it is time to leave off your village *sauvagerie*, and to permit yourself to be amused with what amuses the rest of us. But you must please to remember, my dear, that I shall not exactly approve your refusing to do everything I ask you, while you display the most ready compliance with the requests of the first handsome young man who takes notice of you. Your papa would not approve of that, I can promise you. So now, remember, that you will be expected to go through with these charades like the rest of the party, and do whatever may happen to be required of you, with the same ready goodwill as your cousins."

Having said this, she returned to the group who were now assembled in the back drawing-room; and ere it separated, the arrangement for the first charade had been fully decided upon.

It really seemed very likely that Fanny Belmont would prove right, and that the practising charades *must* be more delightful still than the acting them, for it was hardly possible to conceive that any occupation could prove as agreeable as that which now brought all the family together into the drawing-rooms the moment that breakfast was over, with the addition of the two young men enlisted in their service, and who gave the best proof that they found that service pleasant, by constantly arriving at the moment appointed, though that moment was rather an early one. Mrs. Belmont, though a queer woman in some respects, was quite wise enough to know that such a degree of intimacy as these daily meetings must inevitably produce, could not safely be permitted

with everybody, and accordingly she had taken care to inform herself very accurately who and what the Mr. Wilmot was, who, from having evidently been much used to the amusement, was confessed by the whole company to be the most accomplished actor among them. All her inquiries tended to prove that no lady, having three daughters to marry, could have been more fortunate in the choice of a playfellow for them.

Charles Wilmot had a pretty little unencumbered estate of five thousand a-year, was nearly connected with more than one noble family, had just left the university with the reputation of high talent and excellent character; and, though last, not least, in the catalogue of his perfections, if he did happen to fall in love, he was perfectly at liberty to indulge his fancy, for he was not only fatherless, motherless, and of age, but had no relation, either male or female, who would have thought themselves justified in advising him under any such circumstances to take care what he was about. As to William Morton, his race and expectations had for some time been well known to every member of the Belmont family. If a certain uncle, still unmarried, continued to live, and happened to die a bachelor, William Morton would, of necessity, become a wealthy baronet; a contingency which was considered as quite sufficient to justify his rehearsing love scenes with all the Miss Belmonts in turn. So the practising went on charmingly, and not the less so because Mrs. Belmont appeared to have given up her threatened persecution of Mary Bell;—for either she had forgotten her altogether as a created thing who could have no more to do with charade-acting than a table or chair; or else the apparition of the momentary gleam of bright intelligence which had startled all the family *was remembered*, and the provident mother thought that it might be quite as well she should continue stitching at the little table behind the sofa in the front drawing-room.

This state of things went on for three long delightful mornings, during which the characters of the first part had been imagined and allotted, and the progress of the dialogue sketched out. Incubus was, at the particular

request of Mr. Wilmot, the word chosen for the first performance, and of this the first act was to be an inn. No landlord could be mustered, but Mrs. Belmont had consented to enact the part of landlady, conscious, from the result of the quick counsel called in her secret heart, that the costume might easily be made exceedingly becoming to her handsome face and person, without at all losing sight of the character. Morton undertook to be a waiter, who should appear with the proper jerk as often as he was called for; and, moreover, undertake, by the opportunities afforded in his official capacity, to satisfy the curiosity of a sentimental traveller (Wilmot) concerning a mysterious young lady, who, with her maid, had been for some days occupying an apartment at the inn, with a very evident wish for concealment. Richard was to be this young lady's choleric father, who should arrive at the inn in search of her in the disguise of a pedlar, and sing the song of Autolycus. The mysterious lady was to be personated by Fanny, Margaret readily undertaking the part of the maid, tempted thereto by Morton's saying that he must have a coaxing, love-making sort of scene with the *soubrette*, for the purpose of finding out who the mysterious lady might be. Charlotte was well contented to enact the "fair maid of the inn," thinking that it would enable her to be as coquettish in costume, style, and manner, as her heart could wish. William Belmont was to be a detestable old bachelor, intended for the young lady's husband by her tyrannical father. All this was quite perfect, and it was clear to everybody that no more parts could be invented, and that poor Mary Bell might be left in peace.

The first arranging the plot made a very busy morning indeed, for there was the usual fear in everybody that they would not have enough to do. Therefore during the whole of that period, the fact of Mary Bell's having absented herself from the drawing-rooms altogether was scarcely remarked, and not at all commented upon by any one. On the second, the order of exits and entrances was settled; and on the third, the respective characters slightly muttered over what they intended to say, and the attitudes, and the taking of hands, and the tapping

of shoulders, were canvassed and practised. This part of the business required a great deal of consultation, and considerable repetition, before anything like a decision was arrived at, as to how it should be.

But at length, however, it was all declared to be quite right and proper; and then arose considerable doubts and uncertainty as to the second syllable. Nobody had thought about it when they seized upon *inn*, always a favourite, and convertible to anything, or they might have divided it otherwise, and made it *ink* and *you*—(spelling was unanimously declared to be of no consequence). But it was too late now, for it was quite impossible to give up what had been so beautifully arranged; and so, after long pondering, it was determined that one of the girls should run up-stairs and bring down Mary Bell, who certainly would not have ventured to write the word had she not heard of its being performed. Margaret, the messenger, had found her cousin very contentedly engaged with a book in the little attic assigned to her use; but coming from her mother, armed with all the power of the word *must*, she dispatched her business very quickly, and returned to the drawing-room, accompanied by Mary Bell.

"What did you ever see made of the second syllable of *incubus*, Mary Bell?" said her aunt, as she entered. "We have taken *inn* for the first, of course."

"The word *cue*, or the letter Q," replied Mary Bell.

"Very well, my dear, that will do," returned her aunt, with a nod of dismissal; and Mary Bell turned to leave the room.

"Stay a moment, *belle Marie*," exclaimed William Belmont. "May not Mary Bell stay and have to perform the part of audience, mother?" he added; "we really want some one to tell us, in the parts where we are all engaged together, whether we are right or wrong."

"May? To be sure she may if she likes it," replied Mrs. Belmont. "Do you suppose, Sir Conqueror, that I desired her to take herself off? Indeed, I did recollect the advantage of having a looker-on, but did not feel quite certain that Mary Bell would like to be useful. But of course we shall be greatly obliged to her if she will."

"Indeed I will be useful if I can," replied Mary Bell, with more animation of manner than she ever found courage to display before, since her arrival in Bolton Street.

"Very well, then, sit down in that chair," said Mrs. Belmont. "That, I take it, will be just the best place in the house, and it is there we must put Lady Montravers, if we can get her, for you know she is a critic *par excellence*. Sit down there, Mary Bell, and keep your eye steadily fixed upon us. You must be careful not to look off, because, if you do, it will be of no use at all sitting there. What we want is to know whether we seem to leave any awkward pauses, and also whether we appear to hurry through the business too much. Do you understand?"

"Yes, aunt, I think so," replied Mary Bell, conscious, however, as she said so, that she should never have courage to tell any of them they were wrong. And then the important question was put as to whether *Q* or *cue* should be chosen. The possibility of having an ironing board covered with a green cloth put upon the scene, to represent a billiard-table, was warmly canvassed, and Charlotte remembered taking a lesson once from Lord Somebody Something upon playing with a cue instead of a mace, and she was fully aware how many very good attitudes might be introduced; so she voted for *cue* and the billiard-table, and said she was quite ready to undertake the scene, and that she and the waiter might amuse themselves in this way without the least violation of probability. The waiter elect seconded the proposal with great eloquence, declaring that the scene would be exceedingly effective, and highly comic, but Mrs. Belmont strongly objected to the difficulty of setting up the billiard-table.

"Really, dear mamma," remonstrated Charlotte, "one would think there was not a servant in the house. You know we are to have a curtain, and anything, you know, may be done behind the curtain." This sally was received with a loud laugh by the young lady's lively brothers; and, after a little more discussion, Mrs. Belmont yielded to the general opinion, that a billiard-table would make an admirable scene, and *cue* was decided on as the second syllable, Wilmot stipulating, however, that

to prevent the entire action from being too much suspended during this second act, the father should arrive in the course of it, and break up the game by a vehement demand for his lost daughter. Then the syllable *bus* was taken as the familiar diminutive of *omnibus*, and the young lady, informed of her father's arrival, determined, with the assistance of the amiable, but unknown Wilmot, to escape by means of this humble vehicle, the approach of which was to be announced by the waiter. But the old man rushes in, separates Fanny and Wilmot, and the *bus* is employed to carry her away.

In the last scene, the tyrannical father was to be discovered restlessly asleep on a couch. Troubled dreams torment him, and a species of nightmare, springing on his chest, tortures him awhile, and he awakes, fully persuaded that the devil had been sent to punish him; and in the terror this idea occasions, he consents to the marriage of his daughter with Wilmot, who turns out to be a gentleman of high degree. All this went vastly well, and seemed to offer sufficient opportunity for acting. But there was one difficulty which seemed to puzzle them all. How and by whom was the INCUBUS to be enacted?"

"Did you ever see this done, Mary Bell?" demanded Mrs. Belmont, suddenly addressing her niece.

"Yes, aunt," was the reply.

"And how was the Incubus represented?"

"By a child, dressed in black, with great red eyes, and a large pair of horns," said Mary Bell.

"Delicious!" exclaimed the party, almost in general chorus.

"Delicious," said Mrs. Belmont, shaking her head dolefully; "but where are we to find a child capable of doing it?"

"I am sure I don't know," responded Charlotte, knitting her brows.

"Oh, mother, a child would be such a horrid bore. I have not the least doubt in the world but that the little wretch would choke me," cried Richard Belmont; "and besides the terror I should be in for my life," he added, only imagine what a plague it would be to have a horrid little spy of a creature admitted behind the scenes, who would be sure to gabble all sorts of tales when he got

home again, which would as surely travel through the whole circle of our acquaintance, and render the whole thing a failure. I shall positively refuse to act if any children are admitted behind the scenes."

As most of the party agreed with him in this prejudice against receiving assistance from the shooting ideas of the younger part of the creation, all thoughts of an infant *incubus* was abandoned, and the blank-looking party stood in a circle, in great doubt and difficulty as to a substitute.

"Could it not be done by machinery?" said Mr. Morton.

"Yes, to be sure it could," cried the lion-hearted Richard; "what should prevent it?"

"I am afraid the expense might be considerable, Richard," said his mother, looking a little grave.

"Nonsense, my dear mother!" he replied. "You don't suppose I want to have something as delicate in its movement as a watch, do you? Why I have seen at school a hundred things made to jump as high as the incubus need do. I will speak to the carpenter about it. Let us go on now as if the incubus part of the business was done. Trust to me for it.

He was gladly obeyed; everything did go on and all the better, certainly, for having Mary Bell to look at them: for no sooner did she see reason to believe that her aunt's threats concerning the necessity of her being useful had no object more terrible than the making her sit still, and look on, than she became extremely anxious to be of service to them in reality, and having luckily witnessed, while yet but a child, a good many performances of the same kind at a merry-making mansion near her home, she was able to give many hints that were really of importance. As the business went on, and the second and third charades were formed, her courage increased, because not a word was said about her being expected to act. She no longer kept her eyes fixed either upon her needle or the floor, nor did she tremble as heretofore at the sound of her own voice. There was something in the very nature of the office assigned her that seemed congenial to her spirit.

A sweeter-tempered creature never lived than Mary Bell; and though her constitutional shyness had of late been irritated by the eternal quizzing—nay, mockery, of

her cousins, into an almost morbid desire of escaping observation, the idea of being useful to others made her forget herself, and released her for a time from that terrible sensitiveness which genuine shyness produces, and which is probably more painful in its effects than those who have never suffered from it can easily imagine. The great source of Mary Bell's present relief from this suffering, however, did not so much arise from her own increased courage, as from the total absorption of all the faculties of all her cousins in preparing themselves for exhibition. Mary Bell had been the standing joke of the family ever since she entered the house, and never had the shafts of their boasted wit wanted an object since she had been within their reach. But now they had no time for *fun*, no leisure to invent *accidents* which should make Mary Bell look like a fool. All the energies of their nature were devoted to appearing to the greatest possible advantage in their charades, and Mary Bell was often blushing from pleasure, instead of shyness, without their being at all aware of it.

The individual who beyond all comparison enjoyed all these rehearsals the most, was Charles Wilmot. Though by no means addicted to what the Belmont family called fun, he was very fond of amusement, and these charades amused him in many ways. He had a remarkable power both of conceiving character and representing it; and the graceful facility with which he could *improviser* a part was quite extraordinary. Without being at all a vain man, he liked greatly to exercise this power, it was a great amusement to him; and, moreover, it was very pleasant to feel himself of such great importance to the troop as he was speedily made aware of being. The three Miss Belmonts were very handsome, and being constantly the object of attention and admiration to three very handsome girls can scarcely ever be disagreeable to any young man of five-and-twenty. But this was not all that Charles Wilmot had to interest, to charm, to enchant him. Who has not felt the value of a smile from those who smile rarely? Who has not felt the strange, mysterious attraction of extreme reserve when it relaxes into gentle kindness of manner towards themselves? It was

impossible to watch the versatile talents of Wilmot as Mary Bell now did, without being charmed by them; and it was equally so for a young girl who believed herself and her observations to be totally overlooked amidst the busy interest of what was going on, to keep such watchful guard over her countenance as to prevent its expression from being read by one who, despite his occupation, had still leisure enough to watch it keenly.

Little did Mary Bell think that every smile that brightened her eye, and dimpled round her mouth—nay, almost every thought that arose within her innocent heart—was seen, noted, and deeply cared for, by Charles Wilmot. He was exceedingly well satisfied, and considerably pleased, by the undisguised admiration which flashed from the bright eyes of Fanny Belmont, but he was touched to the very soul by the unconscious involuntary repetition of it, which he read in those of Mary Bell. When Charlotte smiled upon him in approval, till she showed her magnificent teeth from ear to ear, he smiled at her in return, and each felt the pleasant consciousness of being thought exceedingly charming by the other; but when his eye caught the soft, sweet smile of Mary Bell, nothing but his watchful care not to bring upon her and himself conjointly the observation of the family, prevented him from being at her side in a moment to ask her why she smiled, and whether she thought his conception of his character right or wrong. When the bright cheek of Margaret became brighter still, as he acted with her, he thought her very lovely, and liked his occupation all the better for giving him the opportunity of looking at her; but if a blush mantled the soft cheek of Mary Bell as her eye met his, he longed to throw himself at her feet, and confess at last that it was to please her and her only that he exerted himself.

And could Mary Bell be quite unconscious of all this? No; not quite. There was enough of talent, enough of attraction in Charles Wilmot to touch the heart of any girl (if fancy-free) who had reason to believe that she had touched his. But, alas! too greatly was the charm increased in the case of Mary Bell. She was surrounded by all the nearest relations she had in the world, save

her father, and to all and each of them she felt and knew herself to be an object of contempt and ridicule. She never met the eye of either of them without reading in it something of reproof or of mockery. Her cousin William, indeed, often told her that she would be devilish handsome if she would leave off being so cursedly shy; but there was so much more of insult than of compliment in this, that she shrank from him with more repugnance than from either of the others, and would rather at any time have met the biting ridicule of the bright-eyed Fanny than the offensive compliments of her brother.

Dangerous, indeed, was the contrast which the manners of Wilmot offered to all this, and the poor stranger felt it in her heart of hearts. Not that she dared to hope that Wilmot loved her. The very utmost flight of all the vanity in her composition could not carry her to such a height of presumption; but she was sure he pitied her; she was sure that he understood her feelings, though nobody else did, and that he did not consider shyness as precisely the same as mental imbecility: she was sure that he took pleasure, great pleasure, in seeing her amused by his performance; she was almost sure that he took more pleasure in pleasing her than anybody else. How angelic must be the mind in which pity could thus triumph over vanity! Mary Bell thought that she could never feel too grateful for such exceeding kindness, and thus, almost as a matter of duty, her gentle young heart melted away till every feeling was centred and absorbed in love. And that Charles Wilmot loved her, tenderly loved her in return, is most certain. In fact, he loved her even more than he was himself aware of, for his mind was at ease upon the subject. He saw plainly enough, and strange would it have been had he not, the effect produced upon her feelings by the contrast of his manner towards her with that of all others who surrounded her; he knew that he was loved; he knew, too, that neither the Bolton Street aunt, nor the naval father, could find any reasonable objection to his alliance, and therefore reposed himself in perfect security upon a happy future, which required no anxious cares on his part to bring to fruition.

The time he had fixed upon in his own mind for declaring his affection was the return of Captain Bell from his cruise; and in thus delaying it there was both kindness and discretion; kindness, because he feared that, did he make known his attachment while she continued in Bolton Street, her aunt and cousins would infallibly find means to turn the happiness he hoped to bestow into torment of some kind or other; and discretion, because he wisely remembered that having no living parent, or other near relation to assist his judgment in the all-important matter of choosing a wife, it became his duty not to be over-hasty in deciding finally, and for ever, upon a point so vitally important to his happiness. And thus, in the very fullest enjoyment of hope, as reasonable as it was delightful, his fancy amused, his talents displayed, his vanity gratified, his tenderest feelings excited, yet his heart completely fearless and at ease, it can hardly be doubted that Wilmot enjoyed the month of practising most vividly.

With intentions so generous,—so honourable,—so far beyond all that the very highest hopes of Mary Bell had ever suggested, how is it possible to say that Wilmot was acting otherwise than well and nobly? It would be unjust to say so, inasmuch as every thought and purpose of his heart was good. Yet there was a greater mixture of selfishness in the happiness he was enjoying than he at all suspected. Had he endeavoured a little to put himself in the place of Mary Bell—had he endeavoured to guess how she felt, as silent, apart, and often unnoticed for hours together, she watched his lively spirits display themselves in unnumbered gay and gallant sayings and doings with her happy cousins,—had he done this, he might perhaps have perceived that it was possible his intended wife was less perfectly happy than she might have been had his cautiousness been a little less, and his anxiety about her present feelings a little greater.

Time galloped gaily along, however, with the charade-players, and the day for which the exhibition was fixed was rapidly approaching, yet still the means of performing the last scene of *incubus* had not appeared. Richard Belmont had told them to "trust him," and they had

done so rather longer, as it seemed, than was prudent, for a few days only remained for the "practising," yet still the contrivance he had promised was not forthcoming. Nothing could be better than the whole of Richard Belmont's performance of the agonies of a guilty man struggling with troubled dreams; and had the representation been a drama instead of a charade, there would have been no more occasion for an incubus to appear bodily upon the scene, than for the ghost of Banquo to appear at the table of Macbeth. But in a charade, it was clearly necessary that an *incubus* as visible to the eye as to the mind should be brought upon the scene, or the verbal catastrophe would be abortive.

"Confound the fellow!" exclaimed Richard, having once again gone through the part, and the very next day being that fixed for the dressed rehearsal. "He swore by all the gods that a carpenter could invoke, that his confounded skip-jack should be here this morning." These were scarcely uttered when the only servant permitted to approach the theatrical premises knocked at the door, and announced the arrival of the anxiously expected mechanist. He was ordered to appear, and did so instantly, bearing in his hand a something of very mysterious ugliness of form, which by the judicious use of a little cobbler's wax, could be made to spring to a very considerable height. The first performance of the little monster was hailed with a perfect shriek of admiration and delight; and then the guilty Richard laid himself once more upon his restless couch, and bade the tormentor do his worst. Again the cobbler's wax was judiciously applied, and again the hideous little figure sprang into the air; but instead of perching on the breast of the conscience-stricken Richard, it bounded pretty nearly in the opposite direction.

"That won't do, my good fellow!" cried the sleeper, starting up; "you could not have set it in the right direction." The experiment was repeated, and the thing sprang backwards head over heels, very decidedly in the direction of the couch; but as to taking its station upon Richard's breast, no such purpose or such power appeared to exist in its wires. Again and again the experiment

was repeated, but always with the same result, till at length it became evident to the whole party that it was impossible to direct its movements with sufficient accuracy to render it available. The disappointment produced by this failure was so great that Mrs. Belmont was unwilling that the astonished carpenter should witness it, and the man was hastily dismissed. And then it was really piteous to hear the exclamations of despair which burst from the troop, of late so enviable in their happiness.

"Good heaven!" cried poor Mrs. Belmont, "what can I do? After such immense trouble, so much expense, and such expectations raised on all sides! This *contre-temps* is really terrible!"

Nobody could comfort her. Everybody felt that every word she said was true, and that instead of exaggeration she had not half expressed the extent of the disappointment which had fallen upon them. Fanny sat down in a corner, and actually appeared to be weeping, till Mr. Wilmot, who, the more firmly he felt himself devoted to Mary Bell, the more carefully avoided a premature discovery of his feelings, with his usual forgetfulness of what *she* might think or feel in the interval, repaired with every appearance of assiduity to the side of her most admired cousin, and appeared to be whispering words of comfort in her ear, with a degree of earnestness that was really affectionate. It might fill many a page to tell all the anguish, the vehemently resisted, but still unconquerable anguish which wrung the heart of the unhappy Mary as she witnessed this seeming devotion. How vainly did she tell herself that she had no right to suffer! How vainly did she confess to her contrite heart, that could all the world see her agonies, there would not be one, save her poor devoted father, who would not blame instead of pitying her. Oh, why had Wilmot ever drawn her heart, her soul, her long-schooled humble spirit from the shade in which they had contentedly nestled themselves for life? Mary Bell felt that it would have been very bitter to have listened to professions of love from Charles Wilmot, and then to have found those professions false; but, as it now seemed to her, this misery would have been nothing in com-

parison to that of knowing that she had given her love unsought, and had now to watch the proof that it was unwished for and unvalued. Poor Mary Bell! She did the hearts of her fellow-creatures injustice in thinking that none would pity her, for but few could have known what she felt and have refused to do so.

But nobody did know what she felt, poor little soul; and while she was engaged in torturing herself as much as possible at one end of the room, Charles Wilmot was exerting himself strenuously at the other, in order to advance his own particular scheme of operations. He had fancied once or twice of late that the bright eyes of Fanny had followed him rather too curiously when he had yielded to the temptation of walking off the stage and across the room to say a few words to Mary Bell, on some pretence or other, for the purpose of indulging himself with the sight of her eyes raised to his face—and he was quite right. Fanny had observed him very curiously. Not above a week of the practising month had elapsed ere this lively young lady had decided on seriously completing the conquest of Mr. Wilmot's heart, and permitting him, in due time, to become the lawful master of her destiny. It might, perhaps, have made some trifling difference in her speculations had she been aware that the remarkable brilliance of talent displayed by the young man, and his greatly increased air of happy gaiety, arose not, as she supposed, from the felicity of being perpetually within reach of the eyes, to which he had more than once alluded in her hearing, but entirely to the full contentment ensuing upon having made up his mind, beyond the reach of any further harassing doubts, to take the neglected Mary Bell for his wife.

But most assuredly she had no such stuff in her thoughts, and it was only within the last few days that she had taken it into her head to fancy that Mary Bell was putting herself ridiculously in Charles Wilmot's way, contriving somehow or other to make him speak to her whether he wished it or not. Such a notion as this could not by possibility enter the head of such a young lady as Miss Fanny Belmont, especially when she was beginning to fancy herself very violently in love (for not more

than the twentieth time in her life) without producing some troublesome results. A rapid soliloquy, mentally uttered, as she watched Wilmot's sudden approach to Mary Bell, during the noisy moment which followed the entrance of the carpenter, may show what sort of results were probable in the present case. The eye that followed his movement was indeed bright, brighter perhaps than ever, but it could scarcely be called beautiful, for it boded no good to those it fell upon.

"If I believed it possible—if I only believed it possible," thought she, "that Mary Bell was such an artful little demon as to endeavour to show him that she is not so great a fool as she looks, and not quite so hideously ugly and vulgar as she appears to the world in general—if I could only believe this possible, I would teach her to know her place in a manner she should not soon forget. But, no! I have caught him—I know it, I am sure of it. These detestable mutterings only arise from a silly sort of good-nature on his part, which makes him fancy it amiable to notice her, because nobody else has patience to do it. But I know how charmingly gay and beautiful the little idiot looks when she is laughed at, and it shall not be my fault if she does not put some of these peculiar graces in practice before the eyes of Wilmot."

While these soft thoughts were revolving in the mind of the bright-eyed Fanny, the total discomfiture of all hope from the incubus of the carpenter was completed, the man dismissed, and the company left in the state of despair that has been already described—Fanny exaggerating her sorrow, till it seemed to relieve itself in tears, and brought Wilmot to her side as we have related.

He whispered, he smiled, he took her hand. Fanny sent a rapid glance across the room, and looked at Mary Bell. The eyes that were wont to "love the ground" were now fixed, intently fixed, upon her and Wilmot, and their expression, for that one instant, was too full of woe to be mistaken.

"Indeed!" whispered the heart, but not the lips of Fanny; "it is so, is it? Then I must mind what I am about."

Meanwhile, Richard, who, though treating the matter as he did everything else, very lightly, felt that he was

not only the responsible person upon this occasion, but also the one whose acting would be the most affected, unless the loss of the mechanical incubus were in some way supplied, was eagerly turning in his thoughts every possible device for the purpose; and at length starting up, he walked over to his mother, still occupied in deploring his unhappy condition, and whispered a few words in her ear. She listened attentively, and started as he went on, as if some new and striking idea had been suggested to her. He then left her and applied himself to the hopping-machine which the carpenter had left, as if still intent upon examining its capabilities. Mrs. Belmont meanwhile walked over to Mary Bell, and touching her on the shoulder, made a sign that she should follow her to the most distant window of the front drawing-room. Having reached it, she placed her with her back towards the party they had left, and thus addressed her:—

"Mary Bell, you see the utter destruction that has fallen upon all our schemes in consequence of this disappointment. You must be conscious that you are in a great degree answerable for this, because of your having thought proper to give us so unmanageable a word, and therefore I think you must feel that it is your duty to get us out of the scrape. It is now quite impossible to give up the charade, on account of the great expense we have been at in preparing it; your uncle, with all his sweet temper, would never forgive me, and, depend upon it, he would never forgive you. The only way to remedy this is by your undertaking the part yourself."

"Aunt!" gasped Mary Bell, in reply; and it was the only word she uttered.

"Now, do not try my patience too severely, Mary Bell!" resumed Mrs. Belmont, in a low, deep whisper, and with an emphasis that might truly have startled a less timid spirit than that of Mary Bell, "I really am in no state to be trifled with. I tell you, Mary Bell; that you will be guilty of a great crime if you refuse me. I stand here as the representative of your father, and I command you to do what I require."

"Heaven help me!" exclaimed the poor girl, pressing her hand upon her forehead; "what is it you require of me?"

"What?—a mere nothing, child—not the thousandth part of the exertion that I and all your cousins are making for the general amusement; and certainly it will be the most abominable piece of selfishness that ever was practised, if you refuse—but it is impossible you *can* refuse. It would be perfectly diabolical, and for your dear father's sake I will not believe it possible."

"But what is it you would have me do?" repeated the poor girl, her lips trembling, and her complexion as white as marble.

"Come with me, my dear child," replied Mrs. Belmont, with sudden kindness of manner, and passing her arm under that of her niece, to lead her back to the party. "Come with me, and you will find that we shall all be ready enough to contrive that it shall be made as little troublesome to you as possible. And besides, it will last but for an instant, and you have not a word to utter."

"But what is it I am to do?—what?—what?" reiterated Mary Bell, in a voice of anguish, as she remembered the hundred and fifty guests whose eyes were to be fixed upon her.

"Do not be so dreadfully affected, child," returned her aunt, "and think so very much more of yourself than anybody else does. Upon my word it looks very much as if you were trying to set your cap at some particular person, and hoped to draw his attention by all these grimaces. Perhaps you expect that Mr. Wilmot, for instance, may fall in love with your excessive modesty? But you had better let all that alone, Mary Bell. Your good father would by no means approve it, I can tell you."

Mary Bell now yielded unresistingly to the impulse of her aunt's arm. Had she been leading her to the edge of a precipice for the avowed purpose of throwing her over it, she would have done the same.

"Your cousin, Mary Bell, is willing to help you," said Mrs. Belmont, as they approached the party. "Nothing can be easier, you know, than for her to perform the part which she describes the child as having taken, in the representation she saw of a charade on this tiresome word."

"Oh, what a dear, good girl!" exclaimed Charlotte. "How very kind of her. I declare I did not believe she had half good-nature enough to do any such thing."

"Oh, yes! Mary Bell can be very good-natured when she chooses it," said Margaret, laughing. "Remember how promptly she wrote down her three words, before any one of us had began ours. But then to be sure, it was a gentleman who asked her, and that makes a difference sometimes. However, it is mamma that has done it now, and nobody can laugh at Mary Bell for that."

"Laugh at her, indeed! I am sure that we are all excessively obliged to her," said Richard, coming forward with an air of more civility, and less mockery, than he had ever before used in addressing her.

"But please to observe," cried William Belmont, "that there is a great deal to be done yet before she can be ready. There is the dress to be thought of and to be made; and besides, she will have to practise."

"We all know how fond Mary Bell is of stitching," said Richard, relaxing a little from his gratitude into his usual tone; "so I shall recommend her setting to work instantly, and manufacturing her infernal costume herself."

"But will Miss Bell really have to manufacture her own horns?" demanded Morton, who had by this time become the pet of the whole family, from his happy propensity to joke-making. This sally about the horns delighted them all so greatly, and the image of Mary Bell assiduously preparing her own monstrosities, appeared to them so irresistibly comic, that notwithstanding the pressure of business at the moment, they one and all burst forth into a paroxysm of laughter, in which Morton joined as heartily as his modesty, at having produced it, would let him. Fanny, meanwhile, was doing *l'impossible* to keep Wilmot by her side, and to prevent him, as much as might be, from perceiving what was going on, till the hapless Mary Bell had gone too far to recede. She was making him hold one end of a wreath of flowers that she was adding to at the other, and his leaving it would evidently have been fatal to the operation. She had contrived, too, so to place him, that his back was turned towards the stage, and the party assembled on it; but when this burst of laughter caught his ear, he turned round, and his eye instantly catching the figure of Mary Bell in the midst of the party, though her pale face was

in another direction, he inquired rather eagerly what was the cause of their mirth.

"I am glad you can leave Fanny for one single moment," exclaimed Margaret, "for I think we shall want your assistance yet, before we shall actually be able to set Mary Bell at work. We have none of us forgotten the instantaneous effect of the gold pencil-case which you put into her hands when we were writing words. And now, if you please, Mr. Wilmot, we want you to put a steel-needle into her hands in exactly the same fascinating manner, for we want her to go to work without losing a moment."

This speech produced, perhaps, more than its desired effect both on Wilmot and Mary Bell. He instantly determined that he would not be driven by the detestable vivacity of Miss Margaret into abandoning the scheme he had laid down for himself, of keeping them all in ignorance of his intentions till the return of his beloved's father; delighting in the idea of carrying her off from among them, as his bride, before they had recovered from their horror and astonishment upon finding upon which of the party his choice had fallen;—for Charles Wilmot was not at all more blind than other young gentlemen of five thousand a year, to the extent of the field from among which he might have chosen without danger of rejection. No, nothing, he was quite determined, should induce him to abandon this scheme; and in order to avoid the danger of being tempted to betray himself, by interfering with too evident an interest in what was going on—which he doubted not was some new jest against his love, for the endurance of which she should soon be rewarded by unbounded happiness—to avoid this danger, he gently placed his end of the wreath between Fanny's fingers, and left the room. On Mary Bell, the effect of Margaret's words were more powerful still. The opening phrase, "I am glad you can leave Fanny for a single moment," seemed to carry an arrow of fire through her heart; while those which followed, hinting at his influence upon herself, instantly determined her to do and to suffer whatever was proposed to her by her aunt and cousins, to prevent the possibility of seeming to be influenced by him.

"You have half killed poor Wilmot!" said Fanny, as

soon as the door closed behind him. "The idea of seeing Mary Bell performing with horns and a tail is too much, and he has run away to enjoy a laugh that he thought it would be too rude to indulge in here."

The bright-eyed Fanny, it must be observed, had *her* face turned towards the party, and therefore was perfectly aware of all that had been going on, though Wilmot had not.

"Let us have a joke against Wilmot!" said Richard. "Don't let him know anything more about Mary Bell's acting than he does now, which I dare say he will forget when his laugh is over. It will be such good fun to see him stare when he sees her dressed up as a devil."

This proposal was highly approved by the whole party, whose spirits were quite *in alt* again, at the idea of having conquered their difficulties, and Mary Bell was charged not to say a single word before him for her life. For *her life?* Could her life only have been sacrificed, by her letting him know what was going on, he would not have been long ignorant of it—no, not though the piercing eyes of Fanny had been fixed on her as she betrayed it. But would they not have said that "*she was endeavouring to draw his attention by her grimaces?*" This would have been worse than death, and this she was determined to avoid, let it cost her what it might.

Mrs. Belmont very judiciously decided that Mary Bell's own needle should not be the one employed to fabricate the dress that was to envelop her; and one of the women who had been for many days employed in making the theatrical costumes of the party was set to work upon it. Nothing could be more ludicrous than the effect of the horns and fiery eyes. The tail, still strongly advocated by Fanny, was outvoted by the rest, who, probably fearing that the poor girl might resist this addition, proposed that her body should be enveloped in a black and flame-coloured mantle, with nothing of monstrosity visible but the head. Richard judiciously pointed out to his cousin the completeness of the disguise, observing, that nobody could possibly find out whether it was a woman or a boy who performed it. This was evidently true; and though trembling in every joint, Mary Bell repeated her promise of appearing in it, only making the condition that she

was to lay her hands upon his breast, and not to attempt the spring which had been previously proposed. After a little opposition, which they all pretty well knew would be in vain, this variation was agreed to; and at length, everything being completed, the dressed rehearsal took place on the evening preceding that fixed for the public performance. At this rehearsal Mary Bell was not present; an omission the more readily excused by the manager, because her dress was not completely ready, and gladly acceded to by the rest, for the sake of the *fun* they expected from witnessing Wilmot's puzzle, when the performance took place, as to who it was, at last, who was performing the Incubus. This indulgence enabled Mary Bell to absent herself entirely, and go to bed—and greatly was she in want of that relief; for her struggles and agitation had made her very seriously ill, and, had they felt her pulse, they might have doubted of their Incubus for the morrow.

At length, that longed-for morrow came; the stage looked beautiful; the dresses were perfect; the performers in the highest possible spirits, and the company punctual, beyond the most sanguine hopes of the anxious manager; but Mary Bell had not yet appeared in the green-room. Wilmot, who had been looking forward with no little delight to the exciting hurry and bustle of the performance, as likely to give him more opportunity than he had ever yet enjoyed of addressing from time to time a few words to his beloved, without being very strictly watched as he thus indulged himself, began to feel a little fidgety at her absence; and at last, under shelter of his well-practised indifference of voice and manner, he ventured to say, "Will not Miss Bell come amongst us? I think she might be useful in many ways, though she does not act."

Exceedingly well pleased at the tone and manner in which this was said, as well as at everything else about her, Mrs. Belmont replied, with the greatest good-humour, "Oh dear, yes, poor little thing! I told her that she would be wanted behind the scenes, and I dare say she will be here presently; but I rather suspect that she is giving some last touches of her incessant needle to the dress she is to wear at the little dance we are to have after supper."

Mr. Wilmot strongly suspected on his side that this was, in plain English, a falsehood, and that it was greatly more likely that Mary Bell had been ordered to place herself on one of the farthest seats prepared for the audience, than that she should be employed as described. He was a good deal provoked at this; and remembering one or two recent manœuvrings of the susceptible Miss Fanny, gave her credit for having managed to keep her cousin out of his way. For a moment, he felt a strong inclination to be mischievous, and to declare that he was taken ill, and could not play. But many excellent reasons quickly occurred to prevent his doing any such thing. In the first place, he was really too good-natured; in the next, he felt partly sure that Mary Bell would contrive to see him and his acting, however well he might be prevented from seeing her; and thirdly, he recovered his good-humour and his good spirits at once, by remembering in how short a time he should be able to convince Miss Fanny, without having recourse to any untruth whatever, that the laughed at, scorned, and scouted Butt of the family was the chosen of his heart, instead of her bright-eyed intriguing self.

The last reflection made him spring across the stage with a bound, and descend in an attitude as light as that of the Bolognese John's Mercury, exactly behind the curtain, when he performed a succession of bows, in testimony of his impatience for its removal.

And it was removed; and a room full of elegantly dressed company was displayed to the actors, and an exquisitely pretty little stage, with a charming group of actors upon it, was made visible to the company. The whole thing went admirably; and Wilmot himself became too animated by the great applause bestowed on his acting, to feel more than a passing movement of vexation at the non-appearance of Mary Bell. He once more ventured to ask Mrs. Belmont why Miss Bell was not among them; but being told, in reply, that she had preferred being among the audience, he soothed himself with the pleasant conviction, that the preference arose from her wish to see his acting to advantage, and the belief that she was looking at him gave grace and spirit to every word he uttered,

and to every movement he made. At length, the curtain was let down for the preparation of the final act of Incubus, and then it was, and then only, that Wilmot remembered the difficulties which had existed about the procuring some one who could enact the demon nightmare. It was a scene in which he had nothing to do, and which seemed to him of such trifling consequence, that any device, however clumsy, might be made to answer the purpose. He did, however, condescend to inquire of Fanny, who was, as usual, standing very near him, in the space left at the end of the back drawing-room, behind the stage, what they had done about the Incubus. "Oh! you shall see. We have managed it very well—such a glorious pair of horns!"

At this moment, the door of the back drawing-room, which was skilfully left without the side wing, opened, and a slight figure enveloped in a black and flame-coloured mantle, with a hideous head surrounded by a pair of monstrous horns, was led in by Mrs. Belmont. The whole of the dramatic troop, with the exception of Richard, who had already taken his station on the couch, which had been placed on the stage, were assembled in this little green-room, and from one and all burst a shout of suppressed laughter as this ludicrous figure appeared. Though a pair of blazing red eyes glared from the mask, a space had been left through which those of the wearer might look out, and by means of this contrivance, Mary Bell was enabled to see Charles Wilmot's ecstasy of mirth at her appearance, and also that Fanny, overcome by the vehemence of the merry convulsion that had seized on her, had found support on Wilmot's shoulder, on which she rested her arm and her head, apparently unconscious of what she was about, in the irresistible *fun* of the moment.

The slight figure of Mary Bell trembled, and Mrs. Belmont, who was watching her with all the keenness of a manager's anxiety, instantly seized her arm, and led her on the stage, immediately concealing herself behind the wing, and at the same moment making a signal for the curtain to be drawn up.

Behind all stages constructed as carefully as that of Mrs. Belmont's, ways and means are contrived by which

the performers who are not on the stage may, if they choose, watch the proceedings of those who are. By these means nearly every one of the troop were able to watch the proceedings of the Incubus. It made one step forward, and paused.

"Go to him at once!" said the alarmed Mrs. Belmont, in a shrill whisper from behind. But Mary Bell heard her not; she heard only the bursts of laughter from the audience, which greeted her entrance. She saw, too, the multitude of eyes that were fixed upon her, but yet saw, more plainly still, the head of Fanny on the shoulder of Wilmot. No idea that Wilmot *knew her not* ever crossed her brain. She had heard him join in the mocking shout that had greeted her, and the united laughter of the whole audience only seemed to her as the echo of his. That one step forward was her last effort of obedience to her aunt; she uttered one long piercing shriek, and fell senseless on the stage. What was there in that awful cry that could recall the gentle accents of Mary Bell? Yet the moment it reached his ears, Wilmot felt certain that it was she who had uttered it. In an instant he was bending over her on the stage, and in the next he had clasped her in his arms, and was bearing her from it. Mrs. Belmont ordered the curtain to drop, and the puzzled audience were left to make out the charade as they might. Doubts, guesses, conjectures of all sorts occupied the company before the curtain; rage, disappointment, and dismay were in full action behind it. When the envelopments of the hapless Mary Bell were removed, she was found to be perfectly senseless, and from her ghastly aspect, might have been accounted dead, had not the voice of the distracted and repentant Wilmot, who held her in his arms, with a hand pressed upon her still fluttering heart, exclaimed, "She lives—send for assistance!" Yet even then, while the sweet faded flower lay thus low before them, the idea of their entertainment, and of the splendid party assembled to witness it was predominant in the thoughts of the whole Belmont race.

"What an absurd excess of shyness and self-love!" was Mrs. Belmont's first exclamation on seeing her niece brought back insensible. "Throw a glass of water in her

face!" was the second; and then, without paying any further attention to her, she entered, in an agony of agitation and alarm, into a discussion with her sons and daughters, as to the best mode of passing over this most provoking hitch in the performance. The readiness with which this was done, might have added to their theatrical laurels, had not all their remedial measures been rendered abortive by the disappearance of Wilmot. While the whole of the Belmont family were engaged, body and soul, in endeavouring to patch the broken scene, Wilmot had born Mary Bell out of the room, and with the assistance of one of the servants, had laid her on her little attic bed. A bribe, liberally administered, dispatched another servant to summon a neighbouring apothecary, and in a few moments the miserable young man saw the eyes open, upon whose soft glances he had been living in secret with such luxury of love and hope.

And how did they greet him now? Did he meet that look which had so often told his heart he was beloved, even though his lips had resolutely abstained from asking the avowal? Alas! he met only the unmeaning stare of an idiot!

"She is ill, sir,—she is very ill!" he exclaimed, addressing the apothecary. "Animation is restored, but she is not in her senses."

"We must have patience, sir," was the reply.

* * * * * *

For months, and months, and months, poor Wilmot struggled to have patience—and the wretched father, too, returned to claim his one only treasure. He strove to wait with patience also; but it was all in vain. The spark divine was quenched for ever; and though Mary Bell lived many years, the mild, gentle light of her angelic spirit never beamed from those downcast eyes again.

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